

# THE SMART SET

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# THE BONBONNIÈRE

By Ethel Watts Mumford

**M**ISS MARCIA PRESBY, a slim little woman of uncertain age, stood at her window overlooking the grass court of the Hôtel Ritz. Her gentle face wore an expression of disapproval.

At a second-story window, diagonally opposite, sat a young woman in a pink négligée, whose Titian top-knot caught the light with a metallic luster unknown to mere hair. It was upon these shimmering tresses that Miss Presby's glances of disapprobation were bent. She turned from her contemplation at the sound of an opening door.

"You are home early, dear," she said, softly, as her sister entered.

Mrs. Wysong-Lord nodded, motioning to the negro boy who followed in her wake bearing a black-topped box.

"Where's Elise?" she asked. "Elise! Unpack my gown and return the box."

The boy, whose dusky face showed an unwonted spirit of cowed humility, bowed respectfully, as he obeyed Mrs. Lord's gesture toward the adjoining room.

"You seem vexed," Miss Presby ventured.

"I cannot understand"—Mrs. Lord drew off her gloves as if they were responsible for her irritation—"I cannot understand the way these French people receive the colored races. As I came down the hall just now, I found that boy in conversation with one of the maids; she was actually flirting—that is a coarse word, but the only one. It revolted me more than I can tell you. I recognized him as the Martiniquais they employ at Francis's, and over-

heard him ask for our number. I ordered him to follow me. You should have seen his manner change—he looked positively guilty. He knows his place well enough. The fault lies with these utterly regardless French who permit such liberties!"

She paused, abruptly.

"My dear, remember what Mr. Van Zeim says—'All souls are equal,'" admonished Miss Presby.

"All souls may be equal, but all bodies are not, Marcia. I am not narrow, but one must hold to the dignities of life. They are the safeguards of society."

"I'm not disagreeing with you," Miss Presby hastened to aver, "but you express yourself too strongly. I know what you mean, and you are quite right, but we must consider the point of view."

"I have always found it difficult to adjust myself, and I fear I always shall." Mrs. Wysong-Lord seated herself by the centre-table, and absently turned the pages of her daughter's latest purchase, "Les Vieilles Chançons de France." "I observe that Americans in Paris appear to be affected by their surroundings to such an extent that they lose control of themselves. I cannot do that, Marcia, and I am glad of it."

The boy from Francis's recrossed the room, his eyes fixed with respectful admiration upon the dignified figure of Mrs. Wysong-Lord.

"Here," she ordered. He advanced, obsequiously. She dropped a fifty-centime piece into his yellow palm. "And the next time you are sent here to deliver anything, don't stop in the

halls to talk, or I shall report you. You may go."

He backed to the door, which he opened noiselessly, and slipped outside.

Mrs. Lord went to her bedroom, laid aside her simple traveling hat, and adjusted the smooth bands of her white, soft hair. Her refined, pale face was somewhat stern, her thin lips tightly closed. Her fine eyes were distant, though kindly, in expression. An exquisite tailor gown, faultless shoes, and the few well-chosen rings upon her slender, tapering fingers, all betokened refinement, and quiet, somewhat studied elegance.

The sound of loud feminine laughter and high-pitched conversation in the hallway brought her back to the sitting-room, a frown contracting her straight brows. She exchanged a glance with Miss Presby that, louder than words, proclaimed their mutual opinion.

"This is the worst of these large hostellries," sighed Marcia. "I wish we could find some quiet family hotel. Of course, we are women of the world, and, aside from the annoyance, there can be no possible harm. But the influence of these caravansaries cannot but be detrimental to a young girl like Margot."

Mrs. Lord nodded emphatic approval.

"I have been impressed with that. It seems hard to deprive the child of the amusement of having tea downstairs where all the world congregates, but, really, the atmosphere of the place is vitiating—the dress and manner of the women are disgracefully loud. I have been thinking that, in the future, we would better have our tea in our own salon. But what is one to do? The Trudeaues and the Buckinghams are stopping here, and even the Mortimer-Bangs. I do wish Adelaide would answer my letter! I fully expected to find she had planned everything for us. She always had a way of putting things through with astonishing rapidity. I don't quite understand her silence, unless she is preparing one of her pet sur-

prises. She always loved a 'mystification,' as the French say."

Again the high-pitched girlish voice rang out in the corridor.

"Why, you dear old skeesicks! when did you get here?"

The exclamation was followed by a shower of giggles and screams, through which the murmur of a well-modulated voice was audible.

Mrs. Wysong-Lord rose in amazement.

"Why, that's Margot's voice! Can she be talking to that—that ill-bred—!"

The strident tones continued:

"Well, you're just going to have tea with papa and me—at five. I'll come for you. Isn't it a circus down there? This is great larks! You can't? Oh, but you've got to! I must run now, papa's waiting—'bye."

The door opened, and Margot entered the room, followed by the majestic presence of the Rev. A. Z. Van Zeim, cousin and spiritual adviser of the late Mr. Wysong-Lord. The girl was undeniably beautiful, but the perfection of her features was marred by a repellent frigidity of manner. She was tall, slender, and not ungraceful. Her heavy black hair was wound in neat coils at the nape of her neck. Her brown eyes were over-serious, and her well-modeled mouth scrupulously prim. When she spoke, a single revolted chin-dimple begged indulgence of her Puritan rigidity.

"My child," exclaimed her mother, "who spoke to you in the hall? I could not believe my ears when I heard your voice replying. Who and what is this creature, and how did you come to know such a person?"

"That was Polly Wheating, mother," Margot answered, listlessly. "She had the room next to mine at school."

"Indeed! I am surprised at the Misses Adams accepting such a pupil. Her laugh, her voice, her language, indicate from what stratum she has risen. You will not cultivate her acquaintance further! And as for having tea—"

"Margot declined at once," put in

Van Zeim, tactfully. "It was really no fault of hers that the young person addressed her. But one must be indulgent. A hoydenish exterior may cover excellent qualities, and girls quickly outgrow the natural noisiness of buoyant youth."

"You are always lenient," smiled Miss Presby.

Margot slipped out of her modish little jacket, and unpinned her hat.

"What shall I do, mother?" she inquired. "I'll have to answer if she speaks to me. She's a schoolmate, after all. I don't like her, but she has always been very nice to me. Must I refuse to meet her father if she brings him over? If you don't let me present her to you, she will be very much hurt."

Mrs. Lord looked distressed. At heart she was kindly.

"Well, my dear, of course, we shall have to be guided by circumstances. A lady must always conduct herself with politeness, but you must endeavor to keep relations formal, and not encourage any appearance of familiarity, particularly in public places."

"Yes, mother," acquiesced Margot.

"Did you enjoy the Louvre, Mr. Van Zeim?" asked Miss Presby, anxious to turn the conversation into pleasanter channels.

"Yes, indeed, and Margot, also. We have had a charming morning, have we not?"

"Yes, thank you," said Margot. "The Botticellis are wonderful, and the Leonardo da Vincis. We are planning to go again very soon."

"Dear me," said Van Zeim, "I must be growing old—I'd quite forgotten. We stopped at the banker's on our way, and here are some letters."

With a courtly bow, he handed a packet to Mrs. Lord.

"Ah, thank you, Augustus. Marcia, two for you; Margot, some wedding cards—a note from Ellie—and here is a letter from Adelaide at last! Now we shall know what she has been able to do for us. It's a good deal of an experiment, keeping house in

France, but I've always wished to try it. These little châteaux are so charming."

She tore open the crested envelope, and read aloud:

"DEAR EVELYN:

"I have both good and bad news. I will begin with the bad, and have it over with. I am leaving Double Tours to-day en route for Vienna. Poor little Gerald's hearing is growing noticeably worse, and I am taking him to Esselorn, the famous aurist. Something must be done at once, and he is the man to find the remedy, if one exists. I am, of course, in the deepest anxiety, torn between my hopes and fears, and, believe me, nothing but this dire necessity could make me leave now that I have the prospect of you as my near neighbor. Now, for my good news! I have secured for you the sweetest little château in all France, a 'gem of purest ray serene,' in a perfect Louis XV. setting. It has everything—even ghosts—and forms part of the dependencies of the Malèvique estate. It was only through my friendship with the vicomtesse that I was able to rent it. They are enormously wealthy, and, though they never occupy the house, it has been kept as a sort of 'show place.' There is a salon, *ma chère*, with Boucher panels. There are Watteau canavases in the walls of the 'rose boudoir'; there are real Vernis Martin cabinets, and a *chaise longue* carved by Minciola himself. There is also a garden—*oh, mais*, a garden! If I could only be there when you see it! But to business. You gave me carte blanche—I have secured La Bonbonnière. You will find that the card is no longer white, but the figures will not frighten you. The gardeners and so on you will keep. I have engaged maids, chef, coachman and butler—the last is English, for your greater convenience. You have but to take possession and thank yours truly. I enclose a time-table. Select your train, and telegraph James McGye—that's your butler; he will see that Jules—that's your coachman—meets you at Arques—that's your station. In addition to the horses I hired by the month for you, and had brought up from Paris, I've sent mine to your stables. In kindness to me, keep them exercised. My friends will call. You will find them charming, particularly old Madame de Montalou, who is a character; her son, who hasn't one, is equally delightful, so I advise you to keep your sweet Margot well out of his sight. Otherwise, it is quite safe. There is Paul Malèvique, a splendid *parti*, and the Duc d'Alencourt, three miles down the river at Charteris. You don't know how it breaks my heart to lose you this way, just as I foresee a whole happy Summer with you and yours. If all goes well, however, I may be back in August, and we'll hope for the best. Take my advice and fly to your nest at once. You

will grudge every hour you lose from that little heaven-on-earth.

"Adieu, and I hope, *à bientôt*.

"Faithfully,

"ADELAIDE."

"Now, isn't that nice!" murmured Miss Presby.

Margot flushed with annoyance.

"She seems to think, mother, that you have match-making intentions."

Mrs. Wysong-Lord raised her eyebrows.

"My dear, what nonsense! It is only one of Adelaide's little jokes. She knows perfectly well that I would never permit the attentions of these immoral Frenchmen. She is very kind, and her friends are sure to be desirable people, but as for anything more than mere neighborly relations—she wouldn't be so ridiculous."

The Rev. Van Zeim smiled, faintly.

"You forget that Madame de Thierry's married life was singularly happy. She may not entertain the same opinion of Frenchmen as you do—her experience—"

"De Thierry was an exceptional, a very exceptional, man," Mrs. Lord admitted, reluctantly. "However," she went on, "I am delighted Adelaide has been able to find us such a charming place, though I am exceedingly disappointed that she won't be there."

"Poor little Gerald!" sighed Miss Presby.

Mrs. Lord settled back into her chair.

"I must telegraph my sympathy and thanks at once. Will you ring, please, Augustus? I shall be very glad," she continued, "to be in another atmosphere. I confess the influence of Paris is distressing. I have invariably found that it grates upon one's nerves."

Miss Presby glanced between the curtains at the glinting Henner tresses of the lady across the court, and agreed.

## II

WITH varied anticipations, Mrs. Wysong-Lord, Miss Presby, the Rev. A. Z. Van Zeim and the icily beautiful Margot journeyed from Paris. In a second-class compartment rode many

maids, and a King Charles spaniel; in the baggage-car rose a tumultus of luggage that seemed to defy transportation.

The entire party was irreproachable, particularly Mrs. Wysong-Lord, gowned in a smart traveling suit of gray, her beautiful white hair almost concealed by the many veils depending from her eminently appropriate toque. Miss Margot was immaculate. Her rebellious hair was subdued in neat coils. Her hat was properly girlish, her gown of blue severely plain, though it bore the mark of Paquin.

The train slowed down, a tiny station came into view, the guard opened the compartment doors, and the party descended rapidly, but without hurry. The maids appeared, laden with hand baggage; a thunderous thumping at the rear of the platform testified to the disintegration of the tumultus in the baggage-car. A moment later, and the order of the guard, "Gentlemen the voyageurs into carriages!" rang out. Compartment locks clicked, a horn sounded, and the Wysong-Lords stood alone upon the platform. Yet not alone; a bowing menial in livery respectfully called their attention to the unimportant fact that he was a footman, doubtless in their service, and, with a touch to his hat, led the way behind the *gare*, where a maroon station-omnibus of American pattern was drawn up. Behind it a second conveyance awaited the servants, while a flat-car on high wheels fairly yawned for trunks.

All this Mrs. Wysong-Lord accepted at a glance, with no sign of either surprise or commendation.

The party drove off through a hamlet of low, stone houses, down a dusty road lined with poplars, then to the right through a smiling and beautiful valley—ancient trees, broad meadows, a silver river of rapid flow, bending and winding in its erratic course seaward, superb vistas, hills crowned with verdure, through which here and there turrets and crenelated towers pricked the sky.

"What a pleasing landscape!" approved Mrs. Wysong-Lord.

"Lovely!" said Margot.

"Charming!" sighed Miss Presby.

"And what excellent roads!" added the chaplain.

The carriage turned through a high brick-and-marble gateway, and bowled smoothly down a wide avenue, shadowed by huge, interlacing trees. There was a glimpse of lawn, a flash from the placid surface of the most artificial of artificial lakes, before high lilac hedges shut off the view. The horses trotted smartly around a formal parterre, and stopped before the exquisitely carved doors of La Bonbonnière.

An hour or so later, while the other members of the household were resting from the fatigue of travel, Margot, in a white tea-gown, looking like a self-satisfied angel, made a tour of inspection. The hallway, with its wooden panels of saffron hue and delicate polish, delighted her. The candle brackets and the ormolu newel-post were finer than any she had ever seen. Even the knob of the salon door was a gem of workmanship. She turned it, and stepped softly into the room.

Yes, there were the Boucher panels—groups of laughing cherubs, weeping cherubs, even quarreling cherubs, each instinct with life and love. The walls swarmed with them, the ceiling was a-swirl with their flying forms, the whole coquettish room was vaguely astir. One was conscious of inaudible laughter. On the mantel, upheld by two delicately modeled dryads, stood a gold Cupid spinning a ball of blue enamel, which bore, in golden outlines, the world's familiar continents—the equator was a band upon which the hours shone in white numbers. The mechanism that had revolved the equator had long ago ceased to move, but Cupid appeared ready to make the world go round for all time.

The dimple in Margot's chin suddenly asserted itself, a gleam of joy lighted her somber eyes. She gazed, laughed aloud and clapped her hands. With a gurgle of sheer enjoyment, she

drew her hand lightly over the azure silk of the hangings, and sniffed at a bowl of roses on the card-table. She passed to the adjoining apartment.

"Oh," she said, aloud, "you love of a room!" All was yellow, embroidered satin, except what was shining Chinese porcelain, in panels long and narrow, in plates let into the walls, in vases on the mantels. A delightful Louis XV. notion of Chinese luxury, contrasting sharply with the view from the long French windows—terraces a-quiver with nodding flowers, descending in soft succession to the borders of a fountain, where three marble mermaids disported themselves with the mincing manners of court dames.

"Oh," said Margot, "you dear, sweet duck of a house!—you delicious delight of a garden!"

The afternoon shone warm and mel- low. "I'm going out," said Margot. Pushing open one of the door-win- dows, she set her dainty foot on the gravel paths, but, the soft turf alluring, forgetful of decorum, she ran pell-mell across the grass, among the parti- colored flower-beds, tumbled down the terraces, laughing all the time in rip- ples of irrepressible merriment. Stop- ping suddenly at the fountain, she blew a kiss to the mermaids.

"For two cents," said Margot, "I would wade!" The mood was strong upon her, but the shock of this re- markable impulse steadied her for a moment. She glanced back at the gay red-and-white façade of the house. "I wonder if mother saw me?" flashed through her mind.

Then a miracle happened. "And what if she did? I don't care!" ex- claimed Miss Margot Angeline Wysong- Lord. Thereupon she dipped one tiny foot, silk stocking, slipper and all, into the fountain. "Oo—oo!" she shiv- ered; "it's cold!" She shook her foot with the disgusted movement of a Persian kitten that has tested the cream-jug with an inquisitive paw, then darted on, between scented hedges, across more lawns, down to the glimmering river where it wound

in graceful curves, hurrying by as if on some important, happy mission. Margot's eyes were dancing, so were her feet; her cheeks were as pink as the roses on the terraces; her hair was shaken into a million ripples, clusters and curls, and, though the hem of her tea-gown was wet, grass-stained and muddy, in all her life she had never been so beautiful.

Roland de Montalou, on the other side of the stream, sat up suddenly, nearly dropping his Béranger into the water.

"What have we here? In the name of all the little blue rabbits, is it a goddess? Am I dreaming? I have had but one absinthe! Oh, beautiful providence! so to reward me for burying myself in this hole to please my mother! If such is the reward of virtue, I will be a Bayard! I will burn candles to all the young and lovely saintesses in the calendar!"

His movement attracted her attention. She looked up. He rose hastily, still clinging to Béranger, and bowed profoundly.

The goddess's behavior was disconcerting. She dimpled, laughed outright, dropped a deep court curtsey, and, with a gleeful wave of her hand, fled laughing toward the shelter of the hedges.

Roland de Montalou stood as if petrified—for how long he did not know. He was aroused by a halloo, as young d'Alencourt came galloping over the lawn, followed by half a dozen English hounds.

"What are you doing, wasting an afternoon like this, gazing at nothing?" he demanded, gaily. "It's a day in a thousand!"

"I believe thee, my old one! It is a day in two hundred thousand! Gazing at nothing! Oh, sacred name of an umbrella! I have been gazing at a pearl, a rose, a dream!"

D'Alencourt glanced up, quickly. "Oh, the Americans who have taken La Bonbonnière! Is she, then, such a marvel?"

"As I said, a vision—eyes like black diamonds, hair of jet, a cheek

of marble flushed with rose, features chiseled!"

"*Mon cher*," said d'Alencourt, "according to your description your Dulcinea needs only a heart of stone and a will of iron to make her the hardest thing I have ever heard of. But I gather sufficient from your sculptor-lapidary description to determine me to pay my respects as attendant to the first lady caller—and I shall see that no time is lost."

"You will find me there when you come," said Montalou, with decision. D'Alencourt laughed.

"It's droll. Figure to yourself, this American household is exactly—oh, but, exactly, the same as that of the celebrated duchesse. If you please—*la maman*, daughter, aunt, and the abbé—his pardon, the clergyman—even, so I am told by François, who saw them at the station, a lap-dog—a King Charles."

Roland grinned, hopefully.

"Well, you know what the lovely daughter did. I'm sure I could live up to the other half of the bargain."

"You've lived down to the gentleman's reputation in the past, anyway. Come along, and make yourself beautiful. As I passed the stable, I told Victor to saddle The Fox for you. Come, species of an old do nothing."

The species of an old do nothing arose and followed.

Through an opening in the hedge Margot had watched the arrival of the horseman and all subsequent happenings. "It promises," said the young lady, cheerfully, "to be a pleasant Summer." She addressed the clouds overhead, much as if she depended upon the weather for her enjoyment. Evidently satisfied with the atmospheric promise, she burst into song, the refrain of a music-hall ditty and, dancing back to the house, entered the yellow room.

Comfortably ensconced on the famous *chaise longue* was Mrs. Wysong-Lord, attired in her very best négligée of black Cluny lace over white moire. On the window-seat, the Rev. V. Z.

conversed in seductive tones with Miss Presby, who undoubtedly was "making eyes."

At any other time, this exhibition, no less than the sight of Mrs. Wysong-Lord actually lounging, would have startled Margot. Somehow, these things seemed natural in their present surroundings. She even kept on humming her disreputable little song, and, contrary to all precedent, her mother beamed approval.

"You seem very happy, my dear," she murmured, indulgently.

"And so do you, mother, and you look as pretty as a peach. I wish you would wear more light things instead of black."

Mrs. Lord smiled and bridled. Never had she been so susceptible to adulation.

The Rev. Van Zeim joined the conversation, gallantly.

"I quite agree with our lovely Margot. I conceive it the duty—yes, duty—of every beautiful woman to be just as beautiful as possible."

His bow included the three ladies with equal politeness, but his gaze lingered on the blue eyes of Miss Presby, who returned the glance with interest.

Mrs. Lord laughed, and shook her fan coquettishly at the chaplain.

"Tut, tut! Remember your cloth, flatterer—Tea!" she demanded, suddenly, in tones of irritation; "tea at once! What are these servants thinking of!"

The curtains parted, and the footman entered, bearing the glittering service. His mistress delivered herself of a few remarks in far more fluent French than she had previously found at her command. A moment later, her displeasure found vent once more.

"Rum! Where is the rum? *Mon Dieu!* The idea! No rum for the tea! Then bring port, Madeira—anything—!"

She was tired. There was no life in tea!

Her wants were hurriedly supplied, and the good lady comforted herself liberally.

"Really," smiled the chaplain, "I feel the need of a little stimulant myself—with your kind permission—" He tossed down a glass of Madeira and smiled, knowingly. "Ah! excellent! Thirty years old, if it's a day. For perfection in wine and women, one must have maturity—unless"—and he raised his glass to Margot—"it is the effervescent and intoxicating champagne; that is not age, but vintage."

"That reminds me," said Mrs. Lord, "that I have not ordered the wines for dinner, and, by the way, we must dress."

The first meal within the hospitable walls of the frivolous, mirror-decked dining-room passed off with unwonted gaiety. Mrs. Lord developed a wit so caustic, and the Rev. Van Zeim a cynicism so humorous, that the airy roof-tree rang with merriment. The party rose from the table to coffee and liqueurs in the Chinese room. Margot, weary with laughter, languidly made her way to the deep window. Candles innumerable cast a mellow glow upon the thousand treasures of the *salon d'or*, but found not one to compare with her in loveliness. She stood looking out upon the garden, white and slender as the moonlit lilies beneath the casement, and, as she gazed, she sang a quaint, Provençal ditty that had suddenly leaped to life in her memory. Where had she heard it? Ah, yes, she had glanced over the music in "*Les Vieilles Chançons de France*." Strange it should have made so deep an impression!

There was a pause, half physical well-being, half sentiment, as the notes of "*Belle Isambour*" floated through the room.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Wysong-Lord, suddenly, rapping her lorgnon on the arm of the chair. "This is abominably uninteresting. Do something, somebody. You have no more conversation than a Buddhist idol. I didn't come here to be bored!"

There was a suspicious after-dinner flush on her cheeks, and her speech was unusually rapid.

Miss Presby yawned.

"Why do anything? We've been traveling all day; getting settled, too, and after such a heavy dinner—why do anything? Let us retire early—"

"Retire early!" exclaimed Mrs. Lord. "Marcia, you're an idiot! I am awake, very wide awake! If there is one thing I abhor, it's going to bed early. I asked you to suggest something to do—to do, you understand! Augustus, haven't you an idea in your head?"

"Dominoes," said Van Zeim.

"Dominoes!" Mrs. Lord exploded. "I'll have you to understand I'm not to be made game of!"

"Whist," he suggested, brightening.

"Well, yes," she nodded. "Margot, ring! There are duplicate boards in the second tray of my pigskin trunk."

Miss Presby yawned again. "Not duplicate whist! I really can't, it's such a strain on one's mind!"

"Strain on your mind!" cried her irritable sister. "One would have to search for your intellect with a magnifying glass! Strain on the mind, indeed!—first catch your mind! If you hadn't taken five glasses of port, you'd be able to play as well as you are ever capable of playing."

The Rev. Van Zeim laughed as Miss Presby colored with annoyance. "Plain whist for to-night," he murmured, in conciliating tones. "I confess I do not feel up to mental gymnastics."

Margot turned from the window.

"I'd rather go out of doors," she said. "It's a heavenly night."

"We are going to play whist," said Mrs. Lord, rising with decision. She turned instinctively to the card-room—a genial alcove, where the Boucher Cupids again occupied the available wall space, but were here engaged in such reprehensible pastimes as fighting turtle-doves, throwing dice for hearts, and racing slender greyhounds.

They took their places as cards were brought.

Mrs. Lord's eyes sparkled, her lips twitched.

"I'm glad you thought of whist," she said, warmly, turning to the chap-

lain. "I had forgotten how much I enjoy the game."

"He jests at scores who never played at bridge," observed Augustus, tentatively.

The game began, but before the deal had passed around the circle, Mrs. Lord's interest had waned.

"Heavens!" she railed, "this is the most 'flat, stale and unprofitable' game I ever sat down to." The last adjective inspired her. "I have it!" she exclaimed, tapping her fingers excitedly upon the table. "We will play for a sou a point."

Miss Presby woke from her lethargy, and drew up her chair.

The Rev. Van Zeim demurred.

"My dear lady, should we—should you— Remember, Miss Lord is but a child."

"Indeed!" said Margot, indignantly. "I'm no more a child than you are! Besides, I don't see what your objections can be. After all, it's mother's money I play with, and that gives her twice as many chances to lose as you have."

"And twice as many to win," he retorted.

"Tut, tut!" interrupted Mrs. Wy-song-Lord. "Cut the pack. My soul! you are a set of snarling spaniels! There—a five of hearts! Just my luck! Hearts! Pooh! a meaningless trump. I have never held an honor in hearts."

Van Zeim bowed.

"On the contrary, you have always held all honors in hearts."

Mrs. Lord sniffed, but, having discovered the ace among her cards, her lips relaxed.

Miss Presby led a small diamond with an exaggerated air of mystery, and the game began in earnest. Mrs. Lord was in luck, and the neatly piled tricks at her elbow accumulated rapidly.

Then Miss Presby nodded. Whether weariness or port held sway was hard to determine. But the result was a game impossible to comprehend, and sorely trying to the patience of her ecclesiastical partner. Margot played with total disregard of convention, and,

had it not been for her mother's phenomenal good fortune, she must have brought bankruptcy upon them.

"Who are our neighbors?" she asked, as she trumped her partner's ace with the nonchalance of a card-sharper.

Mrs. Lord gave vent to her feelings concerning the play before answering the question.

"Heavens! What do you do that for? Of all the utterly imbecile performances I have ever witnessed, that was the most foolish! Pay attention, can't you? The Montalous—"

Margot ignored the invectives, and peacefully returned her opponent's lead.

"Are they friends of Cousin Adelaide's—do you suppose they will call?"

"Margot! are you insane? Clubs were Van Zeim's long suit! Call! Of course, they'll call; but I'm sure I don't care whether they do or not. I don't intend to modify my way of doing things for anybody."

"I don't see any question of modifying our way of living for the Montalous," said Miss Presby, helplessly, concealing a yawn behind her hand.

"Well, I won't—that's all!"

Mrs. Lord slammed down the jack of spades with personal animosity.

They played for some time in silence. Then Mrs. Lord abruptly pushed back her chair. "That's forty-five francs you owe me, Van Zeim," she said. She rang the bell for the butler. "You may close the house now—and—well—I did say I'd never fall into these French habits—but I want my chocolate served to me in bed, at ten tomorrow. The rest of you can please yourselves. Forty-five francs—you remember, now!"

Half an hour later, all was still in La Bonbonnière save a heavy snore from Miss Presby's room. Margot sat before her dressing-glass and smiled roguish approval at her reflection. The soft night wind swept back the curtains, while the moonlight, silvering over her girlish loveliness, contended with the rose-shaded light of the candles.

She gathered the narrow skirts of

her kimono about her, and crossed to the window. How the garden stirred and whispered—lily to rose, rose to lily! The view opened to her a glimpse of fairyland—velvet black and mysterious crystal, dusky silver and shadowed purples. The rippling river shone and beckoned; myriad perfumes, keen and intoxicating, filled the air. Out of the night a nightingale sang, piercing sweet. Margot leaned far out upon the sill, her heart a-throb with youth and romance, night magic and perfume spells. The words of the old song came again to her lips. Softly she sang:

*"Le Roy seant en pleine cour  
Où arrive maint grand Seignour,  
Là l'on ne parle que d'Amour."*

From the shadows beneath the window came a voice—a tender tone, a breath, a sigh—so faint it might have been but the echo of her own:

*"Le Roy envoy un messager,  
Vers Isambour, sans plus tarder,  
D'autant qu'il veut la marier."*

Margot drew back, hesitated, and searched the shadows with smiling eyes, but the song vanished like the ghost of a song. There was no stir in the hedges; the nightingale took up his interrupted serenade to the roses nodding gently.

Margot turned from the window, her pulses strangely stirred.

"It seems," she said, slowly, "that the terraces are haunted!"

Outside, in the bewitched garden, stood young d'Alencourt. He sighed as one awakening from a dream.

"I couldn't imagine what made me come," he murmured, "but now I know!—now I know!"

### III

"ROLAND," said Madame de Montalou, "you are absurd! Pray remember I am arranging your marriage with your cousin, Claire; you are to make yourself agreeable to her, and let *l'Américaine* alone."

"Adored mother, pray allow me"

—Roland yawned discreetly—"the privilege of showering my attentions where I please until after marriage. Observe, if I do not devote myself to our fair neighbor, she will have the whole company distraught. I might efface myself and retire from the field, but that only means that every other man would rush to fill the place which, as host, I have a right to claim. If you wish your fête to be saved from becoming a scene of strife, permit me to bear away the golden apple of discord to the farthest corner of the orangerie, and there hold it tight."

Madame de Montalou laughed. "Sophist!"

"Sophist? Not in the least. Wait till his three watchful daughters behold the admiral at his devotions!"

"True," she chuckled. "It will be most amusing."

"I perceive," said Roland, "that you are preparing a comedy with which to delight your wicked-old-lady sense of humor. It is for this you would relegate me to the mercies of Cousin Claire. You are a heartless epicure of your own emotions."

He crossed to his mother's chair, and kissed her withered cheek affectionately.

"You are very rude to your parent," she said. "And, may I ask, is my son so devoid of emotional epicureanism?"

"I make it a point to inherit only good qualities," he answered.

"*Mon Dieu!*" she exclaimed, ruefully. "What a small choice you had! Nevertheless, I love you, and fear for you."

"The Margot mania? I have it, madame, in a desperate form—the bacilli quite large and active."

"She has been here only a month," she frowned.

"And what has happened? The admiral is quite irresponsible, the pious Edmond is prostrate at her feet, de Castries says he will commit suicide, d'Alencourt sighs all day and talks in his sleep; *le petit* Caissonote does not sleep, and talks all day. Thursday last, while watching her

drive by, the fat innkeeper of the 'Golden Gun' fell from the window. How then, with a Béranger always in my pocket, could you hope for me to escape? I am no better than the rest."

"Well, don't let Claire see it, that's all. This family has had too many dissensions already; we cannot afford to offend the few relatives who remain on speaking terms with us—particularly those with bank-accounts. Come, give me your arm."

As they turned to leave the cheerful boudoir, his mother caught sight of their reflection in the tall cheval-glass. She paused, with a little squeeze of his arm, and a sigh, half content, half regret.

"I am proud of you, Roland," she said.

"And I of you," he answered.

"My sixtieth fête-day," she murmured.

"And the greatest belle in the country-side," he added, indicating the masses of flowers that decorated the room. "See how they have remembered you—and wait—you have not seen half!"

He led her affectionately down the stairs to the great salon, which had been transformed into a bower.

"Ah," she smiled, "you have arranged everything charmingly—developed quite an executive power. I was somewhat tremulous, I must confess, when you insisted on planning everything yourself. Here, I see, you will have the collation served, and over there the musicians will be placed—"

"And here," he interrupted, with a laugh, "I have devised a concealed corner for the apple of discord and her host!"

She shook her head in reproof.

"Incorrigible! In our world one does not do such things. Even if she is American, I do not imagine she will wish to impersonate the forest maid in the dismal wood. Listen, the music begins! People are arriving, and I suppose you wish to let them assemble here before you come for me

to make my grande entrée. To your duties, my son. You will find me waiting in the library."

A half-hour later the scene was brilliant. The salons overflowed with gaily dressed, animated groups, and the wide lawns were sprinkled with chattering visitors, the sparkle and color of uniforms blending with the pale tones of clinging Summer gowns.

Upon her throne-seat, smiling and gracious, Madame de Montalou received the congratulations of her friends. At her side stood Roland, handsome and aristocratic, easy and graceful, but obviously anxious because the party from La Bonbonnière delayed its appearance.

"There is Claire," whispered his mother, maliciously. "You are excused from further service, and may join her. Ah, and here is Yolande, with her inevitable poet."

A tall, nonchalant woman, with narrow, heavy-lidded eyes, advanced, leaning lightly upon the arm of a man, somewhat her junior, whose slightly bald temples, lined face, and sunken eyes, indicated experience beyond his years. Yolande de Colville greeted Madame de Montalou with obvious reserve.

"I was not aware," Yolande said, coldly, when the poet had disposed of the well-turned phrase of compliment he had evidently prepared for the occasion, "that this was to be a costume affair, or is it some bouffe which you are preparing as a surprise?"

Roland looked his mystification, and Renaud d'Estreville colored.

"Ah," she continued, "doubtless it is, as I suspected at first, the eccentric Americans, of whom I hear so much—my first glimpse, I must own, was startling."

"Really?" said Madame de Montalou; "and may I inquire when and how this occurred?"

"It would be a pity," replied Madame de Colville, with irritation, "to spoil the spectacular effect—here they are."

A turning of heads, a ripple of exclamations, a Babel of sudden con-

versation, and the disturbing element entered. First, Mrs. Wysong-Lord in gorgeous array, her head held high, her quick, nervous step ringing sharp on the polished floor. Behind her, Margot, radiant as a June morning, smiling, bowing, dimpling irresistibly. A tiny spaniel was cuddled under her arm, and a totally inappropriate diamond collar encircled her young throat. Closing the procession was an extraordinary brilliant figure, a be-turbaned, be-sashed, balloon-breeched negro lad, bearing with solemn pride an enormous bunch of orchids. The three advanced to Madame de Montalou, whose piquant old face pleated into a thousand wrinkles of suppressed merriment. Madame de Colville turned her back and addressed herself to her cavalier, who, with his eyes riveted on Margot, was oblivious to the attention.

Roland advanced to meet the newcomers, and gallantly conducted Mrs. Lord to the dais.

"A thousand felicitations, *chère Madame de Montalou*," she said, condescendingly.

"And mine," added Margot, over her mother's shoulder.

"Will you let your elders speak, bad child!" rapped out Mrs. Lord. "*Permettez*, a few flowers with which to wish you happiness, *avancez donc*, William!"

The negro boy grinned, and, with a low bow, presented the orchids.

"What magnificence!" exclaimed Madame de Montalou, drawing away from the somewhat sickly fragrance. "Thank you for your kind wishes. Roland, have these flowers placed near the buffet. They are so beautiful every one should see them. Be sure they don't go to my rooms," she added, under her breath—"I should smother."

D'Estreville managed by a masterly flank maneuver to place himself next to Roland, Madame de Colville in vain redoubling her efforts to hold his attention—Margot had glanced at him.

"Ah," murmured Roland to his mother, who was not missing the by-

play, "what did I tell you? The trouble begins."

A gleam of mischief lighted her eyes, and a moment later the poet was bowing before the Americans, while Madame de Colville, astounded and angry, had ranged herself by the disconcerted Roland.

"I wish you and Yolande would find Claire," said the hostess, her eyes snapping with amusement. "D'Estreville will pilot Madame Lord and mademoiselle, and I'm really anxious Claire should feel quite at home. It is her first visit to me, you know," she added, graciously.

The discomfited ones made common cause, and crossed the room to the doorway.

Madame de Montalou, still laughing, turned to her eccentric guests.

"Oh," said Margot, apologetically, "I know I shouldn't have brought Reggie, but he made such a scene when we were leaving—you don't mind, do you?"

"Not in the least," returned Madame de Montalou. "I'm always at home to dogs, and yours I like—he is well-bred. Where did you find your Nubian slave? Did you bring him with you?"

"No," explained Mrs. Lord. "I wanted something, a bit of color, you know, about the house. First, I thought of a parrot. Then I remembered this boy. He was employed by Francis; so I sent for him, and had his livery made. It is really quite cheerful—a relief from the monotony of maids and butlers, though I think I shall put the footman in powder."

"That will be quite perfect," said Madame de Montalou, as she strove to overhear the conversation between the poet and the beauty.

"Yes," Margot was saying, "I put on that diamond collar to keep mother from wearing it. She looked like a Christmas-tree, or the show-window in the Palais Royale. Will you really dedicate a song to me? I shall be enchanted; our Tziganies shall set it to music, and you shall come and listen."

"If you will sing it, I will write a

chançon that will live forever, that 'shall circle the world on wings of melody.'"

Margot smiled.

"Do," she said. "But you know I don't sing much—just hum to myself when I take my solitary walks."

The poet's face brightened.

"And where do you take these lonely rambles?" he inquired, with transparent disingenuousness.

Seemingly innocent of his trend of thought she answered: "Oh, everywhere; but my favorite road is the big highway leading to the village—the views are so beautiful."

"We will see," thought Renaud, "that the walks are not so solitary. A young girl should not wander thus unaccompanied about the country."

Margot aroused him from his pleasant reflections by an exclamation of pleasure. A tall gentleman of military aspect was bowing before her.

"Ah, admiral," she beamed, "I am so glad to see you again."

"And I." He blushed under his tan in violent contrast to his white hair and mustache. "You grow more beautiful every day." He nodded a condescending recognition to the poet, who responded with affected indifference. "How do you manage to be radiant always?" the admiral continued. "You are invariably perched upon the very pinnacle of loveliness, as if to soar even to the realms of Venus herself."

"Ha!" growled the poet; "these heavy-witted fools, who make themselves ridiculous in their efforts to follow the muse! Hear him prate! It sickens me!" And observing that Margot was presenting to his inspired eyes an exquisite view of her shoulder, he bowed his excuses and left them, haughtily.

"You flatter me, admiral," Margot murmured.

"But you have discovered the secret of perfection!"

She smiled, wisely.

"I anoint my face with dew, gathered at five in the morning of the first of May, and I keep under my

pillow a bat's wing from the belfry of Notre Dame—but the whole secret is that I am always well. I walk a great deal, and take long rides."

"Ah!" said the admiral, who, in spite of his marine training, was an enthusiastic horseman. "And when, may I ask, do these gallops take place?"

"Every day." And Margot was apparently quite unaware of the plans forming under the admiral's white hair. "About five o'clock, mother insists that I take a groom, but I always give him the slip. I hate to be tracked by servants—it grates on one's nerves, doesn't it?"

Evidently their tête-à-tête had had the same effect upon the admiral's three daughters, for suddenly and artfully the conversation was broken in upon, and Margot found herself flatteringly but completely absorbed by their enthusiastic attentions. Reggie growled; he was becoming restless. The eldest daughter smiled, tolerantly.

"I have heard," she said, "that in America the dog has quite a social position. That teas and luncheons are given him, and he goes everywhere."

Margot nodded. "Oh, yes, they are quite as much in demand there as the tame cat is here."

"What a sweet little fellow!" murmured the second sister, bending forward, and extending a daintily gloved hand to caress Reggie's silky head. She did not see Margot's slim fingers close in a quick nip upon Reggie's confiding tail. The next instant she was startled by shrill and angry yelps, and Reggie's needle teeth sank into her thumb.

"Oh, how dreadful!" cried Margot, slapping the nose of her snarling pet. "Oh, do forgive him! I am so sorry! Let me see. I hope he won't be sick! Wasn't it fortunate you had on white gloves?—colored ones would have been full of poisonous dye. He didn't break the skin, did he? No? Oh, see," she cried to d'Alencourt, who, having paid his devotions to his hostess, had joined them at the first

outcry, "see what my bad, bad dog has done!"

The three daughters, forming a hollow triangle around their imperiled father, withdrew, ostensibly to ascertain the extent of the damage.

"I saw you pinch the tail of Reginald; I was just behind you," Geoffrey remarked, quietly.

"Then you mustn't tell," she answered, "or I shall let him loose at you!"

"Have pity!" he implored. "Spare me! I am not fit to die!"

"The impertinence of those creatures!" she exclaimed. "They deliberately came over to interfere with my conversation with the admiral! Reggie, you are a dog beloved by his mistress. You shall have unnumbered good things for your noble deed. Did he have his feelings hurt? Poor angel!"

"If I follow up the ladies and bite one—Mademoiselle Marie, the youngest, by preference—will you talk to me like that?" asked d'Alencourt, wistfully.

"You would develop hydrophobia," she answered. "She was in a rage when she left."

"I would risk even that to please you," he said, with conviction. "I couldn't possibly be any more mad than I am. In fact, I think if I should bite Mademoiselle Marie she would develop a wild infatuation for you."

"Then," said Margot, with decision, "I forbid you even the smallest nip."

"Your will is law," he bowed. "The snowy shoulder of the fair Marie shall continue intact. But suppose we walk out for a moment to the terraces. It is very warm here, which, I feel sure, accounts for Reginald's nervous attack; a little air will do him good, and, besides, I can point out to him some charming glimpses of the river and the park. I can tell by his large, full, protruding eyes that he has poetic dispositions and keen appreciations."

"He has," she nodded, gravely.

"His only fault is bad taste in gastronomy. Fancy biting that lean, dried lady!"

"Ah, but suppose him endowed with polite penetration in such matters, my dear, beautiful Miss Lord. He would not be a safe companion for you."

"Let us," said Margot, freezingly, "show Reggie the scenery."

To conduct his fair charge out of doors was no easy matter. She was surrounded, stopped a dozen times to exchange compliments with as many infatuated Lovelaces. Even the women, when not openly hostile, were as enthusiastic as the men. At last, they gained refuge and comparative quiet upon the marble balcony overlooking the lovely valley.

"Reginald," said d'Alencourt, gravely, "to the right you will observe the Château Colville; below is the Malèvique estate, administered by the Vicomtesse Jeanne, a dear friend of mine, to whom I hope some day to present you. She is a great admirer of well-conducted and intelligent dogs. Further on, beyond the meadows, the road leads to Dieppe and the sea. To the left is the river winding by various charming residences, while far away in that clump of very dark verdure, dominating the village of Arques, you will note two heavy Norman towers. Those, Reginald, belong to Les Chartieries, and are absolutely at your disposal. I hope in the near future to entertain you there. I have an English pack, several Great Danes and some Russian boar-hounds of excellent family, who will be pleased to welcome you as their master."

He looked wistfully to Margot's face as he spoke. Her eyes sparkled impishly.

"Reginald accepts with pleasure," she said, with sufficient accent upon the name to rob the remark of any hopeful meaning. "Some day when I go for my daily row, I'll take Reginald along, and show him all the river and the châteaux you so kindly pointed out, and, perhaps, one day I'll row him past Les Chartieries, and let him have a look at that."

"About four o'clock to-morrow afternoon," remarked d'Alencourt, "I shall be in my boat abreast of La Bonbonnière. I mention this so that you will not allow Reginald to call at his residence of Les Chartieries, in the absence of his humble janitor. I think perhaps it would be wiser for you to pass by and have a glimpse of it before you let him come."

"Perhaps," said Margot, absently, "perhaps—listen!" she exclaimed, suddenly. "Oh, lovely! they are playing a minuet! I adore a minuet! Don't you? I never can keep still!" Reggie was unceremoniously slipped from his mistress's silken lap, as Margot rose with dignified sauciness. "One, two, three!" She tapped her slippers toe upon the tessellated pavement, delicately extending her skirt at the side between her dainty fingers. "Forward and bow!" She made a sweeping curtsey, and came back to her first position with exquisite grace. "Come, come!" she exclaimed, flushing with eagerness, "dance it with me—of course you can!"

Hardly knowing what he did, but wholly fascinated by his enchanting partner, he led her through the evolutions of the courtly dance. The figures came to him as if by inspiration, and the astonishing American was so sure of herself, so familiar with the stately measures that a mistake seemed impossible. With bows and turns, gallant advances and coy recessions, shy glances and bold declarations, the mimic dance of love and conquest drew to a close, till, with a final deep obeisance, it ceased.

The music stopped. The mocking voice of Roland de Montalou brought the oblivious dancers to their senses.

"Mademoiselle is a dream, a vision, a Fragonard—but you, *mon cher*, if you could see yourself performing in that twentieth-century costume, your coat-tails waving in the breeze, your white tie bulging, your collar decapitating you! And, oh, species of a blind ostrich, look about you, and behold your delighted audience."

"You are jealous," said d'Alencourt, "of our charming saraband; and as for the audience—so are they."

"And why, may I ask," demanded Margot, haughtily, "may I not dance a minuet upon a balcony, if I choose? Is there anything so unusual about that?"

"Whatever you do is right, your majesty," he submitted, gravely; "but being, as d'Alencourt has so aptly put it, jealous, I think it time he made himself more generally agreeable, and permitted me to show the orangerie to your highness."

"I go!" said d'Alencourt. "You are my host, and I must bend to your despotic will. But if you knew to what ends I leave you, you would not hold so high your homely head! Down with tyrants!"

Squaring his shoulders, he strode away.

"May I have the honor?" begged Roland, bowing.

She slipped her hand upon his arm, and they disappeared toward the retreat "specially designed for the host and the apple of discord."

Meanwhile, d'Alencourt, determination written large upon him, sought out Mrs. Wysong-Lord. He found that lady surrounded, dividing the honors of the afternoon with Madame de Montalou herself, who was frankly absorbed in her eccentric guest. After some impatient manoeuvering, he succeeded in separating the elderly belles, and finding a comparatively quiet spot.

"Ah!" sighed Mrs. Lord, as she seated herself in the depths of a Louis XVI. arm-chair; "I am abominably thirsty. This heat, this air, these sickening flowers! Heavens!"

D'Alencourt bowed. "I have a request to make, Madame Lord."

"Foolish boy," she laughed, raising her lorgnon and examining him with critical approval, "what may I do for you? I'm sure whatever an old lady can do for such a young scamp as you will be permissible and proper. Come, I am as thirsty as the great Sahara! What is your request?"

Geoffrey drew himself up to his full height with courtly manliness. "Madame, I have the honor to beg the hand of your daughter, or at least your permission to approach her as her suitor. I do not know what your customs may be, but I am anxious in all things to meet with your approval. The dot is immaterial to me. You know who I am, and what I have to offer—it is something, but not half what I wish I might give to the woman I love."

Mrs. Wysong-Lord extended her slim hand graciously. D'Alencourt bent and kissed it.

"Naturally it is understood. Pay your court when you please, it has my entire approval—in fact, it is the proper thing. And now, my son, do not forget that I am quite, quite perishing in the desert. Prove to me what an attentive son-in-law you will be, and, as you love me, find me a glass of champagne!"

#### IV

MARGOT sat upon the lush green grass cushioning the river's edge, and threw crumbs to a foolish family of mandarin ducks. Roland stood upon the opposite bank, and looked on with envy.

"I wish I were a duck," he remarked, "or a mandarin, or anything in which you would have a real interest. If I were an automobile, I would be so tame I would take gasoline from your hand."

"I should like that," said Margot, gravely. "I should then have the only tame auto in the whole world. But you are only a man, and almost everybody has a tame man. I think, in fact, I should like a wild one much better."

"Very well," he responded, cheerfully, "I will be savage. I will be a stealthy 'Mohoque,' and take 'scalp-pe-loques.'"

Margot nodded.

"That will be nice. Begin on Renaud's, will you, please?"

Montalou flushed, angrily.

"What do you mean? Has that poet been annoying you?"

"Annoying, no—not that. He's just a nuisance. I'm tired of telling him I don't want him. Then he goes and complains to the Colville. At first, she was jealous of me because he would love me, and now she's furious because I won't love him."

Montalou sat down, settling himself comfortably.

"That is most curious!"

"Oh, not at all, I quite understand it, myself. It's a reflection on her taste. She has made no effort to disguise her infatuation for him, so it's quite natural that she shouldn't like to see her special choice a drug on the market. I'm sorry to be disobliging to both of them, but, really, I can't be bothered."

"How old are you?" demanded Roland, abruptly.

"Nineteen," she answered, destroying a *fleur-de-lis*. "I have reached the years of indiscretion."

He threw up horrified hands. "Nineteen! Heavens! Nineteen! This is an *ingénue*!"

"Nothing so worldly as that, I hope," she observed, seriously.

"An *ingénue*!" he continued, "who dissects the heart of the most Balzacian episodes with the scalpel of a woman of forty! What is this America that produces such girls?"

"I will tell you." Margot cast the remnants of the lily of France upon the curling eddies of the stream. "America is a hothouse, producing wonderful exotic varieties of *jeune fille*. When that is not the case, it is a wind-swept plateau, where the original plant differentiates and becomes, if less intoxicating of perfume, at least extremely hardy. In that case, the American Beauty becomes a hardy bloomer. Do you follow me, or am I too horticultural?"

"You could never be too anything for me to follow you!"

She ignored his compliment, and stared with wide eyes at the blue distance. "*Mon Dieu!*" she murmured. "How strange it all seems—

America! Why, it is a foolish little colony somewhere far away, a place for Jesuits and *courreurs-de-bois*. I can hardly realize that I lived there and was part of it once. Isn't it wonderful how this country absorbs one? Really, don't you find me very French? Do I seem foreign?"

Roland leaned his head upon his arm, and gazed across the stream.

"You are like nothing and no one that I ever met before. I was hoping you were a real American type—I fondly dreamed, a common American type. I was planning to go to America to live. It would be the paradise of Mahomet."

Margot dimpled.

"The Turkish room in the Waldorf would be your Mecca." She sobered, suddenly. "But I really have no desire to go back. This garden, the river, the house—everything here, seems made for me. I've never been so happy."

A self-satisfied smile appeared under Montalou's mustache, and he blew a kiss over the heads of the mandarin ducks.

"Never so happy—never so happy!" Margot repeated, dreamily, as she rose to her feet and brushed the bread-crumbs from her lap.

The dip of oars, the creak of a revolving lock smote upon their ears, and the slim bow of a *canot* shot around a curve, propelled by the vigorous biceps of young d'Alencourt. A few strong strokes brought him between the occupants of either bank. He floated in mid-stream, gently backing water, and regarded them with amused tolerance.

"I'm at the point of tears," he observed, "to break up this neighborly tête-à-tête, but, my dear Montalou, it is what mademoiselle calls in her barbarous English—which I looked up in the dictionary—'*une datte*,' which is a tropical palm-fruit, but, nevertheless, appears to mean a rendezvous."

Roland rolled over and addressed the clouds with disgust. "He is a spoil-joy, a species of a lettuce-head, an escaped one from the asylum! He

has no consideration, no conception of the obligations of friendship!" He sat up and wrathfully watched his chum, as he brought the boat close to the opposite bank, and assisted the fair passenger to embark. "Ha!" he railed, "I hope mademoiselle stamps a hole right through the bottom! I hope there is a flood! I hope you catch a crab and make yourself ridiculous! I hope it rains! I hope you haven't an idea, and make yourself a bore! I hope you run aground! I hope you take cold!"

They were out of sight around the bend, but his sorrowing was distinctly audible. Margot laughed, delightedly.

"I like him," she said. "He is such an object of luxury—so distinctly without any mission, save to delight the eye and amuse the ear."

"His family have found him a very expensive luxury," said d'Alencourt. Then, repenting of his treachery to his friend, he added, hastily: "Everybody likes him—he is so engagingly—er—naughty."

She sighed with sun-warmed happiness of mind and body. The late afternoon light laid a red-gold caress upon the intense green of the landscape. The blue of the sky was half rusty violet; the rushing river flashed like a brazen buckler. Deep in its tumultuous currents the trailing water-weeds took on a copper hue. An opulence of color, an intense and silent orgy of vigorous life, throbbed in the air. Margot felt it in curious kinship of mood. It was as if the transmuted gold of the sun had become blood and glowed in her veins. She sat silent, inhaling deep breaths of pagan delight. They were gliding on an enchanted stream, and surely it took but little imagination to lift aside the veil of the commonplace. To right and left, the giant trees of ancient parks spread their twisted branches, thick foliaged and lusty in their green old age. Half revealed, half hidden, the massive walls and bastions of Norman châteaux looked down from above, or the airy, aspiring pinnacles of Gothic tourelles were silhouetted

against the sky. A breeze, freighted with perfume, crept down upon them as they passed beneath the fairy spires of the chapel of Saint Cunegond. The bells chimed slowly, echoing mellow, liquid tones of topaz and amber.

"Yes," said Margot, suddenly and reflectively. "'Roland'—it is a pretty name. Did you hear the bells say 'Ro—o—land'?"

D'Alencourt rested upon his oars.

"My Queen Margot, do not imagine to yourself that I brought you with me just to hear you talk about that brigand, Roland."

Her eyes narrowed, teasingly. The spell of the golden afternoon was broken.

"Are you so like all other men, that you want to be talked to about yourself?"

D'Alencourt nodded, genially.

"Yes. Or you—on the whole, I think I should like to hear about you. Who are you, anyway?"

She turned from him with a smile.

"I am 'Belle Isambour,'" she said.

He started. Had she guessed it was he who had answered her song, on that moonlit night, when he had stood in the garden and seen her for the first time, as she looked from her window?

"Belle Isambour was very true to her love," he said. "Would you be true like that?"

"Oof!" she sniffed. "Belle Isambour would have listened to the king, if they hadn't shut her up in a tower. Of course, then she made up her mind she'd escape. I would."

*"Belle Isambour est à la tour,  
Où il n'y a peu de jour,  
Mais toujours songe à ses amours."*

Margot's tones thrilled with a spell that was sheer magic—unearthly sweet, as if a supernatural voice sang second to her girlish soprano. So chanted Vivian, the Lorelei, the sirens.

D'Alencourt looked at her, his heart in his eyes, his soul straining to find and touch her elusive spirit.

She sat back among the cushions,

her hand idly dipping in the water, her head thrown back, her eyes half closed, with something almost tragic in their dreaming look, and the voice that came between her scarlet, parted lips, seemed a call directed to him from some other world—a call that wrung his heart and stifled his breath.

"Margot," he murmured, "Margot! Don't be so beautiful, my sweet—you break my heart! Margot!"

She roused herself, quickly, with an impish upturning of lips and eyes.

"Am I beautiful? Am I sweet?" she demanded. "I don't know that that pleases me—beautiful, yes—but sweet! 'Sweet!' Horrid!"

"*Ma douce mie*" is a very exquisite old term of endearment. I'm sorry you don't like it."

He was hurt and angry at her change of mood.

"Well, I don't!" she said, belligerently. "I hate it—it's weak, and poor and dependent. Sweet! How dare you call me sweet! You can put me ashore right here and now! Do you hear? You shall see if I'm sweet. I want to land. Row to the shore," she ordered. She was half in jest, but as she saw his face harden into lines of determination, her mood changed to anger.

He did not obey, but continued to row quietly onward.

"You heard me?" she cried, flushing. "I wish to land!"

"You are perfectly absurd," he argued, "to be angry because I called you sweet."

"I'm angry because you don't do what I ask you to," she retorted.

"But you ask me to put you ashore because I called you sweet, so it all comes back to the same thing."

Opposition fanned the flame of her resistance. She glanced at the flower-grown banks, at the shimmering river, at d'Alencourt pulling energetically, and, without a word of warning, threw all her weight to one side, swinging her feet over the edge of the boat as it careened.

D'Alencourt instinctively strove to balance the capsizing skiff, but her

action had been too swift. The water bulged for a moment above the shining, varnished rim, then, with a crystalline gurgle, rushed in. D'Alencourt lost his balance, and the next instant found them both in the water, the overturned boat between them.

"Can you swim?" came his voice, anxiously.

"No," she answered, cheerfully. "Can you?"

"No. Absurd, isn't it? I'll work my way around, and hold you on. You won't lose your grip, will you?"

"Oh, dear, no!" she laughed. "How delightfully droll! But you'd better not come on this side, too—it would pull the boat over, and make it harder to hold on. Do you think we'll drift out to sea? Do look at the oars and cushions floating down—there's a perfect string of them. I didn't realize there were so many things in a boat, did you?"

Her anger had vanished. In its place was a childish delight in the novelty of the situation, and complete oblivion to any danger.

He worked his way slowly along on the opposite side of the boat till his hands closed over hers. The prospect of spending hours in the water suddenly became alluring.

"You have the most charming hands," he observed, tightening his grip. "I'm so glad you thought to tip us over. And I take it all back; you are not sweet—you are a devil of an angel, or an angel of the devil—but not sweet. I hope no one ever rescues us, and we float on forever. We're not by any chance approaching that bank over there, are we? These eddies are the very mischief. However, we were fortunately in the middle of the channel when we turned over."

"I'm glad it's a warm afternoon," she remarked. "This bath is really refreshing."

"The water has made your hair curl in a fashion ravishing," said d'Alencourt. "I have but one wish—that the curves of this miserable boat were less. The keel is too round and

wide—your enchanting head too far away; otherwise, this would be heaven!"

"Your sentiments, then, have not cooled?" she inquired.

"Not at all. Everything save my love has cooled—all is dampened save my ardor. But did you not see the clouds of steam that rose as I struck the water? Ah, there is a water-rat swimming just ahead of us!"

"Oh! Oh!" screamed Margot. She grasped his hands convulsively.

"That," said d'Alencourt, closing his eyes, "was delicious. I pray the river may teem with rats."

"I hate you!" said Margot, vindictively, with a flash of sudden friendliness in her deep eyes.

A swirl and rush of waters carried them around a bend. The river widened. On either side broad meadows and regular lines of poplars showed the castaways to be out of the château district and nearing the village. The heavy arches of a stone bridge marked where the roadway crossed above the town.

"Alas! a sail—a sail!" cried d'Alencourt. "At any moment we may be rescued!"

"Look!" exclaimed Margot, "there is Madame de Colville's automobile. It's the only mauve one, and that's Renaud chauffing all by himself."

"Perhaps he won't see us," said d'Alencourt, hopefully.

"Perhaps," said Margot; "but he will hear me!"

She raised her voice in a soprano scream for help. The machine stopped short with a jerk and a cloud of steam.

"Hope he's blown the wretched thing up!" said d'Alencourt.

Margot laughed, delightedly, and began to sing once more:

*"Regardant avec grand soin,  
Elle avisa venir de loin,  
Son amy chevauchant grand train."*

*"Amy, qui par ici passez,  
Or arrestez vous, arrestez,  
Ma patience vous aurrez."*

"Only," she explained, "Belle Isambour's knight wasn't riding a lavender

automobile that belonged to another lady, was he?"

"I hope it bit and kicked, anyway," said d'Alencourt, bitterly. "There, now, he's running down to the washing-stones on the other side of the bridge. I believe if I kick continuously I can keep this sacred affair in mid-stream where he cannot rescue us. I do not want to be saved!"

Preceded by a procession of oars, cushions and boat-mats, they approached the bridge. For a moment the cool gloom under the arches enfolded them. They looked up to ancient granite blocks, green and dank with weeds, over which reflections of the glittering waters ran in ripples of light. Then, out once more into the flash of the gold-red sun. D'Alencourt struggled energetically to keep the boat away from the right-hand shore, where leaped and called the excited poet, hovering, wet-footed, upon the broad, flat stones used by the village washerwomen when beating their linen, since linen was invented.

"Do not fear," he called; "I will save you. Do as I say."

Margot giggled, delightedly.

"Idiot," murmured d'Alencourt, under his breath.

"Here," called Renaud, waving a dust-cover over his head; "catch this and I will pull you in."

As the boat shot by, he tossed the duster forward. Margot caught it. The skiff turned sidewise as the shawl became taut. She clung for an instant to the overturned keel, then, with a quick jerk, released her hold, dragging her hand from under d'Alencourt's grip.

"You don't want to be saved, you know," she said, sweetly.

Down the stream went the heir to a dukedom, while an instant later Margot stood upon the stones of the *lavoir*, dripping, bedraggled, and shaking with laughter.

Her rescuer clasped his hands with horror. "D'Alencourt! Oh, why did you not cling to the boat? I could have pulled you both ashore. *Mon Dieu!* what will happen?"

"Happen?" said the lady, cheerfully. "Don't you suppose they'll pick him up as he passes through the village? Of course. They'll have him out by the time he's in sight of the second bridge."

"*Hélas!*" cried the poet. "You are cold, you are wet! Why should I think of him when you suffer? Quick, to the auto! Ah, *Dieu merci*, I came in time."

"I was glad when I saw you," she smiled. "I really began to sing."

"How brave you are!" he exclaimed.

They climbed the rise to the bridge, where stood the lavender motor. Margot leaned over the parapet and gazed affectionately down the river. An excited crowd was gathering along the bank. A fisherman in a dory had put off from the stone steps by the church of *Notre Dame des Flots*. In the midst of the flashing path of sunlight was her whilom companion in danger and the overturned boat.

"I like him," said Margot, dreamily. "I like him very much—don't you?"

"No," said Renaud, sharply, "I don't. He is a *duc*. Come, you are wet. I must take you home at once."

She turned reluctantly, and mounted beside him. He manipulated the gear with a knowing air. There was a puff, an explosive jerk, the ponderous machine quivered spasmodically, and refused to move.

"I might have known it," said Margot. "The lavender charger has balked."

Renaud looked annoyed.

"I'll have it mended in a moment," he assured her; "but perhaps you'd better get out, these stupid things are so uncertain."

She descended from her perch, and watched him as he delved into the depths of coils and tanks, appearing from time to time, oil-covered, frowning and hot.

"This is most unfortunate," he apologized. "I can't find anything the matter—but it won't go."

The machinery pounded and blew with demoniacal energy. Margot kicked her heels against the parapet.

"I'm going to walk," she said.

"You are cold!" he exclaimed, anxiously. "Heavens! you are shivering, and this animal of a motor! *Ciel!* It is to rage!"

Margot had shivered, but not with cold. Over her shoulder, she had watched the rescue of d'Alencourt. At any moment he might come up and offer assistance. After she had played her pranks upon him, that would never do, never!

The sharp, regular hoof-beat of a trotting horse became audible—came closer. Margot advanced to the centre of the road. Renaud under the automobile, deafened by his own language, the din of tools and the escape of steam, heard nothing.

Margot gave a little scream of joy and clapped her hands, as from behind the high stone wall emerged a tall, gray horse, surmounted by a tall, gray man. "The admiral!" she gasped, gleefully, running toward him on swift and noiseless feet.

De Gerney reined in with an exclamation of surprise. "Mademoiselle! What has happened? Did that dirty machine blow you into the water? Inventions of the devil! *Va!*" He dismounted and approached her eagerly.

"Quick, quick!" she whispered, rippling with merriment. "Help me on your horse and you lead him! We'll take the short cut through the Malèvique grounds. I'll tell you all about it—quick! before Mr. Renaud sees!"

Mystified, but delighted, the elderly horse-marine obeyed superior orders. Margot's foot was on his open palm, her hand on his shoulder, in another instant she was balanced, light as a bird, and quite at home, on the back of the gray charger.

"You are a knight," she announced, gravely. "and you are rescuing a demoiselle in distress from a wicked troubadour on—I mean under—a lavender palfry belonging to an enchantress who lives in a château of glass."

The admiral looked mystified, but supremely happy. They turned in at the Malèvique gates, and took a bridle-path that wound between giant oaks.

The long, blue twilight of France had come. Though every object was clear and distinct, all had grown mysterious. One big star pricked the east above the violet hills and spreading tree-tops. The warrior and the distressed demoiselle proceeded slowly and in silence along the moss-grown path.

"First," said Margot, breaking the stillness with melodious whispers, "there was a chief of mercenaries, who would have lain a spell upon me. Then a prayer to good Saint Cunegond brought upon the scene a seigneur, in a barque, and together we drifted upon an enchanted stream, till the seigneur pronounced a forbidden word that broke the magic. So the boat was miraculously overturned, and the rich cargo scattered—rugs of Smyrna, cushions of Tyrian purple, brocades of Damascus—but Saint Cunegond preserved us. Then came the troubadour, from whom you rescued me, and, with the caparison of his charger, he caught me as in a net, and drew me to shore. The seigneur—Saint Ragonde protect him!—went on with the stream."

The admiral listened, spellbound and puzzled.

"The troubadour would have me ride upon his lavender steed, but the beast was possessed of a devil, and would not move. Then you came, most noble knight—" Margot looked into his eyes, and the commander of many galleons straightway struck his colors.

Again they proceeded in silence. The forest trees grew rarer. At the end of an open glade, they came upon the grille admitting to the enclosed gardens of La Bonbonnière, where fruit-trees spread flat against the sun-warmed walls, displaying green, unripened globes. A spasm of regret—the keen, romantic regret of youth—smote the admiral. His enchanted journey was at an end! He forgot his sixty years, his honorable scars, his grown-up daughters. He was a boy again.

"Reine Margot," he began, laying a hand that trembled on the sleek neck of his horse. "I—"

"Oh!" cried the distressed demoiselle, "here we are already—almost home. Take me down. I must slip in unobserved. My mother, the Lady Lord, would question me as to my adventures." She did not wait for assistance, but sprang lightly down, curtseyed deep, held out her hand to his bewildered salute, and slipped, swift and silent as a flying mist, between the formal hedges, through the orangerie toward La Bonbonnière.

## V

THE Vicomtesse Jeanne de Malèvique stood in the library before a huge ecclesiastical lectern, upon which, unfolded, lay a parchment scroll with miniature illuminations. The vicomtesse was a "blue-stocking" in her way, though she bore not the traditional exterior. She was slight, well made, very rose-and-gold, ravishingly gowned in an indescribable something of many ruffles, and, if her stockings were blue, they only matched her eyes, and, furthermore, were tipped by exquisite slippers.

Her particular hobby was the study of the history and traditions of the two great houses she represented. Born a De la Jour d'Estec, married to a Malèvique, she had found a wide field for her curiosity and ambitions in the treasures of a colossal past. She not only knew when, by whom, and how every acre of land and *objet de vertu* had come into the possession of the families, and what the public and political position of every ancestor had been, but her collection of letters and manuscripts relating to intimate and private affairs had led her to many strange discoveries of no small interest to history, had she been willing to reveal them. There were strange documents under lock and key in the Venetian linen-chests. There were forbidden books in the Breton armories, and correspondences, whose revelations in the days when their ink was fresh would have caused many a gory head to fall in France, were methodic-

ally ticketed, sealed and deposited in grim vaults.

She looked up from her perusal of the Byzantine missal before her with a smile of content. Never was stronger contrast than this of a delicate and beautiful woman with her surroundings of ponderous tomes and musty vellum. She sighed, ecstatically. "Oh, how good it is to be in one's own book-world again! The world that is any century old one chooses to make it, and where one can be in any country wished for! Time and space at one's command, and the company one most desires! If that isn't a definition of heaven, I shall never try to define it at all." She rolled the parchment with skilful hands, replacing it in its wrap of silk and in its metal case. "Now for a little glance at my 'Manuel' just to know I haven't been dreaming that I have him. Then a glimpse at 'Froissart.' Heavens! why have I been wasting time in foolish visits, at foolish country houses? Never will I do it again!"

A tap at the door, and a self-effaced servant bowed. "Madame de Colville desires to speak with madame la vicomtesse."

With a rustle and glide *empressé*, yet serpentine, her sister-in-law entered the library.

"So glad you're back again, dear," cooed the visitor. "I knew you would be here, book-worm that you are. I suppose you haven't an idea of what any one is doing or wearing—only what Monsieur Untel has added to his library, or that Madame Chose's extravagance will compel her husband to part with his collections." Madame de Colville kissed Jeanne on both cheeks, taking care not to remove the rouge from her own lips. "Come out of doors," she insisted. "I cannot understand this house mania of yours."

The vicomtesse turned reluctantly from her treasures, and followed in the foamy wake of Madame de Colville's train. They crossed the great hall and the *salle des gardes*, went down the corridor, and made their way from the historic pile to the English garden,

where a tennis-court spread lines of trenchant white upon the velvet green of the turf. A rustic tea-table and wicker chairs grouped in the protecting shade of huge, trim-clipped hedges, invited repose.

From this vantage point not only the game, but the approaches to the château, and the Gothic wing opening from the picture-gallery could be seen.

Madame de Colville settled herself comfortably, but the constraint that had held her indoors did not disappear. Silently she prodded the turf with the white-enameled point of her parasol.

"And what is new?" asked the vicomtesse, with a tinge of incipient weariness in her tones. She hated banal gossip, and knew to a sickening point the inevitable turns and twists of petty feuds and factions.

Madame de Colville tipped up her nose and looked away, with an affectation of tact.

"You know I was against your letting La Bonbonnière from the very first."

"I know. But that was to oblige Adelaide. She didn't expect to leave then, and she was so anxious to have her friends near her. There was no other house. Then, too, I thought these Americans might be an addition to our little society. There's nothing wrong, I hope?"

"Oh, the place is well kept up. They haven't tried to wash off the panels with patent soap, or snip souvenirs from the embroideries—but, my dear, they are absolutely and completely dreadful!"

The hostess sat up in amaze.

"And lifelong friends of Adelaide's! It's impossible! You may not like them, or find them sympathetic—and that, of course, is a matter of personal magnetism—but that they are dreadful! I—why, it can't be!"

"Of course, I might have known you'd see it that way!" Madame de Colville's irritation was obvious. "They have simply upset the whole neighborhood. The mother is a swear-

ing, blustering person, who demands champagne at all hours—and she cheats at cards! The abbé is—well, a libertine, a scandal-monger—witty, I admit, but with no regard for decency. The aunt—*ma chère!* if you could see her wine-colored hair and hear the stories she tells—not in small gatherings only, mind you, but right before our girls, the children, the servants! And, besides, she is openly infatuated with the preposterous priest! And the daughter! The daughter! I cannot find words! It is a scandal—an outrage to the whole community! Imagine it! This very morning, at dawn, I was awakened by baying and shouts—it's not the hunting season and I was startled. I rushed to the window. There, streaming across the park, was the whole pack—men and dogs, and one woman—Miss Weson-Lor’—chasing an anise-seed bag, I heard afterward—alone at that hour, riding like mad, with d'Alencourt and Etrevelle and the admiral, Collincourt, du Vigny—the whole troupe, and not another woman! And that is but one thing—a trifle. That she is mad, is the kindest thing one can say of her. She indulges her vagabond fancy as if her whims were the country's laws. Rides at midnight, dances at midday, refuses to wear a hat, orders a dinner-party at eight in the morning—in fact, simply defies convention, reason, decency!"

The vicomtesse was for once amazed. "How extraordinary! What can it mean! Adelaide told me—why, I can repeat her very words—'They are frightfully conventional, and will probably be shocked at everything at first. Margot is as beautiful as the dawn, and has about as much life as a wooden Saint Anne. But you will find them charming when you have broken down their immaculate, starched barriers! That's what she said, and you know Adelaide as well as I do. What could have been her object in misrepresenting these people?—she who never misrepresents anything! It's a mystery. I can't believe it!"

"You needn't take my word, of

course," said Madame de Colville, testily. "What I am imparting to you is not exclusive information. It's the common talk from here to Rouen. You don't imagine that any effort has been made by these American-circus protégées of Adelaide's and yours, to be unobserved. They simply do not seem to imagine that adverse criticism can be made. They do not appear to be aware of the existence of any one except those whom they choose to recognize as equals—imagine it!—*quel toupet!* There's only one thing to do—cancel that lease!"

"And Adelaide?" objected Jeanne.

"That can't be helped. She has no right to allow such people the shelter of her name and ours."

"But there must be some mistake! Adelaide distinctly said—"

"Adelaide! Adelaide!" Madame de Colville snapped, angrily. "Do as you please, of course, but I fancy when my brother returns he will not quote Adelaide."

She rose as she spoke and turned toward the walk that led to the terrace stair. Below, stood her miniature victoria with its charming roans. The lavender automobile was at present in disgrace.

"Yolande!" called the vicomtesse, gently, "Yolande!"

Madame de Colville haughtily kept on her way. Her sister-in-law started in pursuit, but paused with wrinkled brows.

"What can it mean?" she murmured.

Below, on the driveway, the crunch of approaching wheels announced a new arrival. A smart trap bowed up, driven by Madame du Cailland; with her was Blanche Thou. There were greetings as Madame de Colville posed gracefully by the carriage steps. The ladies descended, and the late visitor, settling back among her cushions, was driven rapidly away. The vicomtesse walked to the overhanging balustrade, and waved a beckoning hand.

"Come through the château," she called, "and avoid the steps—it's easier."

A moment later she was over-

whelmed in a flutter of feminine welcome.

"How glad we all are that you've come!" exclaimed Blanche. "Elise and I simply couldn't wait another minute, though I'm sure you wanted to rest and retire to the library for a day or so before you bothered with any of us."

"No, indeed," said the vicomtesse, cordially. "I'm just as glad as you are, and, moreover, glad that you are glad. Come, let us have a nice long chat. Yolande has been telling me a few of the happenings, but"—Blanche and Elise exchanged a quick glance that did not escape their hostess—"she seems very much disturbed over my tenants of *La Bonbonnière*."

Madame du Cailland's smile broadened.

"Your sister-in-law has lost a poet. Renaud no longer dedicates odes and songs and rondeaus to his garlanded Yolande. The queen is dead! Long live the queen! And that is the Queen Margot. But if she has lost a poet, I have lost a husband, Blanche has lost a brother, you have lost—though you may not know it yet—a whole regiment of adorers. So all this bitterness of Yolande's is really selfish."

Blanche laughed.

"Personally, I am an adorer, too. In all my life I've never seen any one so unutterably, irresistibly fascinating as *la Reine Margot*. You see, even I am content to be a lady in waiting. That's all the best of us can be, these days. Figure to yourself, Jeanne, a radiant morning, a romantic, maddening, moon-riden night, incarnated in a wood nymph from Paquin's."

"I can't," said the vicomtesse.

Elise raised an eyebrow.

"Of course you can't, for she's like nothing you ever saw before! Strangest of all, she is absolutely French—yes, there is a chic, a daintiness, a—*quoi?* A Mignard gone modern and mad."

"But this Mrs. Wysong-Lord," interrupted the hostess; "I'm told——"

Elise shrugged expressive shoulders.

"It is perfectly true she gambles with open enthusiasm. She is quick-tempered, overfond of champagne,

intolerant, dictatorial—and, in spite of it all, I like her. We all do. She has a charm—perhaps we are all hypnotized, who knows?—but the charm is there. Even the flippant and frankly flirtatious clergyman has it; even the maiden aunt, who tells risqué jokes and has a tendency toward port. They defy everything, even the censure they excite. In short, you have inadvertently supplied us with a very interesting, not to say exciting, Summer."

"But this isn't like *Adelaide*," objected the bewildered vicomtesse.

"Oh, there," said Elise, "we enter upon a mystery. In my wildest moments I cannot imagine an intimacy, such as apparently exists. I feel I must be the victim of a hallucination. One thing is certain, though—I am of the queen's party, and so will you be when you see her—and when you hear her! She has a voice, oh, such a voice! It is soprano and contralto in one. It would charm the birds from their nests, the flowers from their stems!"

Blanche nodded.

"I would rather hear her hum to herself in that little way she has than hear Melba sing an aria. What is that old chanson she is always warbling? You know—it's 'Belle Isambour.'"

"'Belle Isambour'!" exclaimed Jeanne de Malèvique, suddenly sitting up very straight, "'Belle Isambour'!"

"Why, yes, 'Belle Isambour,'" said Blanche. "Is there anything so surprising about that? You are pale! What is the matter?"

"Matter!" She checked herself, suddenly. "Oh, nothing—a twinge of neuralgia. Go on, tell me—she sings, then she—they are fond of music?"

"Mad about it. Why, they sent to Paris and had four Hungarian musicians sent down to play for them every evening. It's one continual concert at the house."

Blanche laughed outright, as if at some amusing recollection.

"Why do you laugh?" asked Jeanne.

"Oh, it is part of this delicious and impossible comedy that all the Tziganes are in love with her, too. You should

see their expressions when she is in the room—eight of the most lovesick orbs! And, heavens! what music! Positively the air is so laden with sentiment that, even I—I very nearly—" She blushed and broke off abruptly. "Positively it is an infection. You'll have to have a thorough fumigation against love-microbes when they leave, or we shall have to make a detour to avoid the spot."

Jeanne fixed her eyes upon a distant tree-top. "She is, I understand, rather tall, very slender, but not thin; has rippling black hair in great masses, which she won't have powdered."

"Won't have powdered! Why on earth should she?" exclaimed Elise and Blanche together.

"Did I say powdered? I meant hair-dresser dressed, you know; very red lips, a brilliant color, long, black eyes, and a deep chin dimple."

"I never dreamed Yolande would give you such an accurate description of her. She usually says she 'can't see what we find to admire.'"

"Adelaide has told me of her often," Jeanne quibbled. "I will call at once. You have worked upon my imagination till, doubtless, the realities will prove a terrible disappointment. I'll find a coarse old lady, a self-sufficient parson, a dried-up aunt, and a silly, impertinent little girl."

Blanche shook her head.

"No, no, you won't! The whole family passes all limits, and yet they are not *canaille*—no, there is not a trace of that with them. It is *un laisser-aller à faire peur*—but common? Never!"

"And with that," added Elise, "always more outrageous in their own home than anywhere else, and invariably amusing, always well-bred, no matter with what cataclysmic actions. Imagine Madame de Montalou being sworn at, at piquet, with oaths strung together like beads on a rosary, and only smiling an excuse of her own inattention to the game!"

"Elise, I am dizzy; my head is spinning. This is the age of miracles!"

"Ah, my dear, give these people La Bonbonnière, present it to them, never

let them leave us—life would be too stale!"

"It wouldn't be life at all," returned Blanche. "But as to that, we may hope to keep at least *la Reine*, for mark my words, she will be the Duchesse d'Alencourt of Les Chartieries before the year is out."

Once more a troubled light burned in the grave eyes of the Vicomtesse Jeanne.

"So, our Geoffrey is in love! I might have guessed it would be inevitable. And she? Does she look with favor?"

Elise pursed her lips.

"With favor—yes, if one may say 'favor' of one who turns her glances impartially on all. There is not a word to be found in French, or in any other language, to describe such wholesale heart-slaughter. She is, at one and the same moment, shy, daring, frank, Machiavellian, cruel, kind, matter-of-fact, and poetic. She is all things to all men, except the thing they most desire, and that she is to no man, I firmly believe, in spite of Madame de Colville and the anti-queen party!"

"And with all this," observed Elise, "we haven't even inquired for your health, or when monsieur your husband comes home—what new treasures are on their way to the library, or who made that delicious pink, sunset cloud you are wearing—which goes to show you under what an obsession we have been laboring. I do assure you we need exorcism *in extremis*."

"Don't!" said Jeanne. "I am under the spell, too. I have forgotten that I ever had a treasure, or a husband, or, what is worse—a dress. I shall think, dream, talk of nothing but my extraordinary tenants. Indeed"—an odd expression crossed her face—"you don't know how this interests me. I am actually afraid to think. I fear the moment when I shall be alone, and must work out the puzzle."

Blanche shook out her skirts and rose to her feet.

"It would appear, however, you will have some time to wait before the awful moment, for I perceive Roland

de Montalou, who, doubtless, will entertain you upon the all-important subject, for as many hours, days or years, as you will consent to listen. We will leave you. Rendezvous with us to-morrow—a little *fiv-o'-cloque-derien-du-tout*—to welcome you home. Come, Elise, and let Roland pour out his soul in peace to his mother confessor. *Au revoir*, my dear."

A moment later, Roland was settled delightedly beside his hostess, his face aglow with affectionate welcome.

"But it is years, centuries, since you left us, and if ever I have needed your guiding hand, my good lady, it has been during this Summer!"

"So I hear," said Jeanne, regarding him with motherly solicitude.

"They've been telling you?" He glanced in the direction of the parting trap. She nodded. "Well, they haven't told you half."

"Big infant!" she laughed; "you don't know what they said."

"But they couldn't, not if they had talked for ages instead of minutes." He leaned forward, confidentially. "You'll love them, I know you will."

"All of them?" she questioned, smiling.

"Yes; all of them—even the abbé, and the aunt, who has *coiffée Sainte Catherine*. But you will understand when you see her. She is a whole band of goddesses—she is Aphrodite and Artemis, she is Helen of Troy, and Cleopatra, and Héloïse and Marie Stuart, and—I am going to marry her!"

"Oh, I see—you have embraced Mohammedanism."

"I might as well embrace something," he answered, ruefully. "We are some fifteen or twenty who are going to marry her—here's one of them now."

Jeanne turned and nodded as d'Alencourt dismounted by the hospitable door, reappearing a moment later in the gallery opening upon the terrace. His hostess gave him no time for the usual small talk of welcome.

"I hear you are going to marry," she said, seriously.

"Yes," he replied, emphatically.

"I am going to marry a reckless, untamed devil of an angel."

"And so am I," observed Montalou.

"Well, for that matter," d'Alencourt went on with a genial smile, "so are Esteville, and Monton-Muret, and my respected uncle, the admiral, and your lettuce-head of a cousin, Bérénique, not to mention *le petit Caisse-note*, and the Colvilles' poet. However, *la maman* and I understand each other."

His friend shrugged his shoulders.

"With the title and Charteries, of course, you win with *la maman*, but that does not alter my determination to marry the devil of an angel myself. I give you all fair warning—you needn't accuse me of duplicity."

"As a *parti* you couldn't be worse, you know," Jeanne observed, with friendly frankness. "Don't you love the girl enough to let her marry d'Alencourt and be happy ever after? However, girls these days know enough to feather their own nests, and we needn't worry."

"Somehow, I'm not so sure that she is the girl of these days."

D'Alencourt spoke slowly, almost reluctantly.

The vicomtesse looked up, quickly. Their mutual thought was like an electric shock. "Oh!" she exclaimed, as if to herself. "That would be droll!" But her grave eyes denied any merriment in the situation. "I shall call to-morrow," she went on, "to-morrow afternoon. If, as I surmise, you see the ladies this evening, you might mention my intended visit."

The rival suitors rose simultaneously.

"At once, I fly to obey your orders," said d'Alencourt.

"An excellent excuse! And we may be asked to dinner, if we promise to play whist," said Montalou.

Arm in arm, the rivals took their departure.

Jeanne watched them as they mounted their horses and cantered away together, talking animatedly. Her gentle face was clouded, her brow drawn in lines of anxiety.

"But this is the twentieth century!"

she said, aloud. "Not the Middle Ages! I'm foolish. I'm so filled with my historical researches, with strange bits of half-knowledge and mysticism, that I see everything through the fumes of an enchantress's incense. Bah! I must put all this out of my head and judge fairly!"

She drew a deep breath, and looked out upon the lovely scene with comprehending eyes. "Ah, my dear oaks, my beloved river—what you could tell me if you would! And you, my royal purple hills! You must laugh deep down in your rocky hearts at the little we poor mortals know, or even guess. What is fate? Influence? Soul? You have it all as much as, and more than, we poor little moths of a day." She leaned upon the balustrade, her chin in her hands, her eyes half closed. "'Belle Isambour,'" she murmured, "'Belle Isambour,' that's the song that Madame d'Agenson speaks of in her letters. 'She is always singing an old song from the "Airs de Cour,"' 'Belle Isambour,' and such is her charm that the gallants do proclaim it the loveliest song of France, have set it to a thousand accompaniments, and now the Pompadour is to have it acted as a divertissement in the Royal Theatre.' But I am raving!" exclaimed the Vicomtesse Jeanne, beating the closed rosebud of her fist upon the gray marble of the balustrade. "Jeanne de Malèvique, will you put into your head full of notions, the fact, the incontestable fact, that this is the twentieth century—do you listen well?"

The setting sun made an aureole of her hair, a flame of fire of her rose-colored gown. Still she stood, lost in reverie. Presently she began to sing softly a quaint, simple melody, childish, almost—but with a minor note that caught at a tear:

*"L'on va crier parmy le bourg,  
Elle est morte, Belle Isambour,  
Elle est morte, pour ses amours.*

"Decidedly I must see the doctor," said the Vicomtesse Jeanne. "I must shake off this—this—whatever it is."

But she could not free herself, and when the strokes of midnight boomed

from the tower clock, she was sitting at the vast library-table, a quaint assortment of eighteenth-century souvenirs spread out before her—bundles of yellowed letters: in a setting of jeweled roses, a portrait of Louis XV.; another, of a girl of exquisite beauty, folding in her arms a snub-nosed lap-dog; a box of rings, among them one with a table-cut diamond surrounded by smaller stones, set over a finely painted miniature of a singing canary; two faded blue bows with flashing buckles; a porcelain perfume bottle, a Watteau fan. Her slim fingers touched the relics of a frivolous, glittering, but none the less irrevocably dead, past.

"Ah!" she sighed, "is there a soul of laughter?"

## VI

THE following afternoon the vicomtesse drove over to La Bonbonnière. The day was clear, serene, and balmy. The smiling landscape, bathed in crystalline light, was reassuringly modern, yet her heart beat hard and her hand tightened convulsively as, at last, the cheerful façade of the villa came into view. The horses trotted briskly around the circle to the porte-cochère. Jeanne descended daintily—a frivolous mass of ruffles and chiffon, from which her high-bred face looked out with curiosity not unmixed with fear.

The carved doors stood open, disclosing the saffron walls and ormolu ornaments of the hallway. Preceded by the footman, she advanced, but paused on the last step, as a gleeful shriek rang out. A flying mass of blue and white, precipitated apparently from the ceiling, landed with a little thud. It was only Margot coming down-stairs after the world-old manner of adventurous childhood since banisters were invented. But it startled the footman so that he almost lost his balance, and rooted the vicomtesse where she stood, in unconcealed astonishment. There was a tradition—she dared not believe her eyes!

"Oh," said Miss Wysong-Lord, not

in the least abashed, "you must be Cousin Adelaide's friend, the Vicomtesse de Malèvique. We were expecting you."

"Were you?" asked the visitor, with an uncontrollable impulse to laugh.

"Not just at this very moment, you know." Margot's eyes twinkled merrily as she glanced at the banister. "Mother will be delighted to see you. She is playing tric-trac with the chaplain in the *salon d'or*. Do you know, I envy you this house. I love it! I've never been so happy before."

"I'm glad," murmured the vicomtesse, politely, though her brain was whirling.

A shrill bark almost under her feet awoke the echoes.

"It's only Reggie," said her conductor, reassuringly, stooping to take in her arms a tiny spaniel that continued a *sotto voce* growl of protest as he kept a watchful eye upon the newcomer.

"*Mon Dieu!*" ejaculated the vicomtesse, "even the dog! The very same dog as the one in the portrait!"

"Have you had your dog's portrait painted?" queried Margot, with interest. "Mama is talking of having her canary done by some celebrated miniaturist, for a ring, you know, to be set under a table-cut diamond."

The vicomtesse gasped. That ring! Only the night before she had turned it on her finger, with the retrospective sadness that the pale reflection of the joy and frivolity of the long-dead always brings! An uncanny chill crept over her. She had no time to think, however, for she found herself being effusively received by an elderly lady of fantastic aspect.

Mrs. Lord's formerly smooth and decorous white hair now arose in pompadours and curls, adorned by black-velvet bows. Her flowing gown of yellow and black brocade was cut low. On her still plump and graceful neck, diamonds glittered. Her slim hands were loaded with rings. From under the ruffles of an elaborate petticoat peeped tiny slippers with inordinately high, red-satin heels. Mrs.

Lord had been calling upon her Paris tradesmen for many things.

Behind the little table, strewn with cards and pearl counters, stood the chaplain, bowing gallantly. As he was presented he came forward, raised the visitor's hand to his lips, and kissed it with a touch by no means clerical.

Near by, in a silver wine-cooler, awaited an open bottle of champagne; glasses and a dish of sugar-wafers were close at hand. Every one was affable, polite, very much at home. The atmosphere was delightful, strangely electric, prophetic of something pleasantly extraordinary.

"Ah," exclaimed Mrs. Wysong-Lord, "it is a great pleasure to welcome the friend of our dear Adelaide."

Her manner was cordial, her acceptance of intimacy immediate. Jeanne found herself made one of the household as a matter of course; welcomed as a relative, as one of the blood royal. It was all spontaneous and natural. The surprise and superstitious fear that had held her on entering were gone. Although at every step her suspicions were confirmed, she could no longer judge or observe coldly. She was under the spell, completely absorbed into the charmed circle—strangely happy, at ease, as if for the first time in her life she had found her true level, her appropriate surroundings, her foreordained companions. She spoke and moved as one in a dream, and could never quite recall how, a few moments after her presentation, she came to be playing whist for a franc a point, with the beautiful, azure-clothed, banister-sliding "devil of an angel" for partner.

It seemed quite a matter of course when, the cards proving unfavorable, the hostess, through her well-rouged lips, swore—swore aristocratically, charmingly, with perfectly good breeding and comprehensive thoroughness. The Rev. A. Z. looked up with an indulgent smile, and raised a gracefully protesting hand, but was sharply advised to refill his glass and attend to his lead. Neither did the vicomtesse

find it surprising that Mrs. Lord's deal should provide the lady with a suspicious number of trumps, or that the card she turned should invariably be an honor. Each fact was part of the amazing condition of things. It was unavoidable, necessary. An hour later, when she took her departure, her gold mesh purse was very flat indeed—and that, too, was the inevitable conclusion.

When she found herself in her victoria once more she breathed a long sigh. In her startled eyes was still a vision, seen as she glanced over her shoulder while passing through the Boucher salon—the Rev. A. Z. Van Zeim chucking Miss Presby under the chin. She drove on awhirl with emotion. The occurrences that had seemed so much a matter of course lost their illusion. She panted with excitement.

As her horses pricked their ears, scented the home air and quickened their pace at the heraldic gates of Maléisque, she met d'Alencourt riding his English hunter. She signed to him to follow. Obediently he wheeled, cantering in silence by the little victoria and its fluffy occupant with the strangely grave and startled eyes.

"Come," she said, breathlessly, as the carriage drew up before the château.

She led the way to the library, closed the door, and sank into a chair before the wide, hooded fireplace. D'Alencourt sat upon the table corner, and stared at the unlighted hearth in silence. The pause that followed lengthened to torture. At last, she found her voice, but hardly recognized it as her own, so metallic and sharp it had become.

"I have been to La Bonbonnière," she said, looking him full in the eyes.

He nodded.

"Yes, I saw it in your face," he answered. "And you think—?"

"I don't think—I know."

"But you see, it isn't possible—?" His tone was a question.

"I know it isn't. I know it can't be, that we are mad! But it's so,

nevertheless, in spite of fact and science and the laws of nature! And you recognize that, too, Geoffrey. You and I have studied the past; it belongs to both our houses—we know the intimate details that are proof incontestable. There's no doubt. But what is it? What can it be?"

He shook his head.

"I can't answer that. But whatever and whoever she is, I love her with all there is in me. I may laugh and jest about it—I may talk as I did yesterday with Montalou—but it has gone deep, deeper than I believed possible. You can tell me, as I've told myself, that I'm loving what isn't really there; a mirage, if you will—I love it just the same!"

She rose, nervously.

"I was afraid it would be so," she said, "but perhaps it isn't you—the real you—that is love-mad. It may be that part of your blood and brain that belongs to the Duc Alexandre, or it may be the nameless power that, in this instance, seems to control us all. While I was with them this afternoon I, too, became a part of their world—the—there is only the German word of *Zauberei* that seems to describe it. But, Geoffrey, what—what are we to do?"

D'Alencourt's face hardened.

"I am going to marry her, dead or alive, in spite of everything in heaven or earth or the powers beneath! If it's my ancestor who speaks, then I am all the Duc Alexandre, and no more Geoffrey! For I tell you, there is not an atom of me that does not love her beyond expression!"

"You are bewitched!" she cried, coming close.

"If you like. But isn't all love enchantment? Doesn't every one, when he loves, adore a phantom? Don't we all pursue a rainbow of the senses? Is my case any more impossible than a million others?"

"It is! It is!" she cried. "You must fight it down! We must save them! We must get them away! They must leave at once!"

"If you threaten that, I will pro-

ceed at once to carry her off, if I have to kidnap her. Her mother is my ally. I have already approached her. I think—I hope—Margot loves me. My only fear is—that the past will repeat itself!"

"But you mustn't do this thing. Perhaps you don't really love her. Wait till you know her elsewhere. After she leaves here, follow her to Paris—to America—anywhere, and learn what the real, the true Margot is. Don't be deceived. See, read these." She hastily opened a box upon the table, and thrust into his hands the yellowed letters over which she had pored on the previous evening. "Read, read!" she implored. "You, who know them so well—every word carries conviction not to be withstood."

With shaking fingers he smoothed the limp papers, worn thin in the crease of their foldings. He read on, his face growing more drawn and white every moment.

She watched him with painful sympathy, tearing absently at the laces of her sleeves. The minutes dragged by in quivering suspense. One by one, he read the faded pages. As he replaced the last in its faintly perfumed case, he looked up, and met her agonized eyes with a level gaze of determination.

"I know," he said. "It makes no possible difference."

"Look!" she cried, and held before him the smiling portrait of the girl with the spaniel.

"I know," he said again. From an inner pocket he drew an oval miniature. The same mocking face, instinct with life, the very soul of merriment and passion, looked up from the ivory.

"This was the picture she gave the Duc Alexandre," he said, sadly, as he laid the trinket in Jeanne's trembling hand. "Her name and his are on the case. You see, you can't tell me anything I don't know, or guess. And it can't be helped—I'm past cure."

Jeanne's lips trembled.

"Here," she said, slowly, "take it

back. I must think this out, and, I tell you frankly, I am frightened."

"Are we the only ones to guess this riddle?" she asked, after a moment's silence.

"I think so," he said. "You and I, only, know the whole story; you and I, alone, are fools enough to be convinced by what can't possibly be. So, here we are, a pair of dreamers—ripe for investigation by the medical faculty as to our ability to sign a document, and, I very much fear, unable to pass the examination." He walked about the room, his head bent, his hands behind him, for the moment lost in reverie.

"Well," he said, pulling himself together and shaking his broad shoulders, "this is the first time I have permitted the serious side of the affair to stand before me clearly. I've treated everything humorously and gone my way cheerfully. I shall return to the charge with the same spirit, but with added determination. I'm sorry to distress you, Jeanne, but I have always paid you the compliment of absolute frankness, and I will now. To-morrow night I shall force the issue. I will have the matter settled one way or the other. Even that delay worries me. I would take the field at once, but my mother comes to Charteries to-night, and I must prepare her for the step I am to take."

"I suppose," said Jeanne, "she has heard the gossip and of your attentions, and has come down on that account."

"Yes, undoubtedly. Her letter intimated as much, and, as you may imagine," he smiled, wanly, "she is not pleased—she never will understand, and I sha'n't explain."

"Will nothing bring you to your senses?"

"Nothing."

"You would better put this away."

He took the portrait from the table and gazed at it, fascinated. Jeanne watched him in silence.

Looking up from his contemplation, he said: "The first time I saw her was the night she came. Montalou had been raving about her all through din-

ner. My curiosity was aroused, but it wasn't that alone that made me find an excuse to slip away from him, and scramble across the park in the treacherous moonlight, hiding, like a poacher, behind the hedges till I stood among the roses of La Bonbonnière. It was the charm working then—it holds me now. I didn't know what I wanted, I did not know what I expected to see—until she opened her window. She looked out, leaning on the marble ledge, her hands folded under her chin. There was a pink light behind her that made a crescent of rose on her cheek. The rest of her face was in the white moonlight. Jeanne, I thought I should never be able to move or speak! Then she began to sing 'Belle Isambour'! It seemed that my heart would break, and with that song came something. It was not suspicion then, much less conviction, but a dim, struggling, soul-realization of the miracle. I sang the second verse, very softly. She paused, and listened, as if she had half expected the answer, then turned away and drew the curtain. That was how first I saw her. And from that hour I have been hers, body and spirit! Kismet!"

Jeanne took the portrait once more, and studied it, as though hoping to find some dissimilarity from the living counterpart. But the painter had been faithful to his task. Her voice sank to a whisper. "How strangely that old song seems to run through all this tragic comedy:

*"Mallade et morte m'y feray,  
Porter en terre m'y lairray,  
Pourtant morte je ne seray—"*

"Ah, no, she is not dead, thank God!" said d'Alencourt. "Though they buried her deep under an alien soil a hundred years ago—she had to come back to life, to France, and love!"

"No, no," the vicomtesse shook her head with energy. "It isn't she! It is the influence that lives here—in La Bonbonnière. When they leave, it will lose its control over them. They will be what they were before. It is not

the dead come back—it is their influence, their aura, their Karma, that has never died! I feel it."

"Perhaps we are both right, but either way," said d'Alencourt, "I love her!"

## VII

THE Vicomtesse de Malèvique spent a wakeful night. She was troubled and ill at ease, even when, for a moment, she forgot the cause. Had it not been for her talk with d'Alencourt, she would have convinced herself that her reason was unsettled. As it was, she argued, such coincidence of mania was impossible; the next moment she felt inclined to bar the latter word from the dictionaries. It was with a sigh of mingled apprehension and relief that she finally despatched a note to her tenant. She would call for Mrs. Lord at half after three, and take her driving.

For an anxious hour she awaited the reply. It came—a charmingly worded acceptance—and at once the vicomtesse planned her campaign. She ordered the strongest horses to be put to the carriage, for she was determined to place as many miles as possible between her guest and the mysterious influences that governed La Bonbonnière. By driving fast, one could reach the turn to Coligny on the Dieppe road in an hour; then to the Croix de Berueval, Gontreau, and the long road home. She was fighting for distance as a condemned man fights for time. It was her only hope that she might pass beyond the influence of the unknown atmosphere—a chance, but the only plan that offered promise of success.

When the victoria drew up before the villa, Margot, in a riding-habit, was sitting on the steps, slapping at her booted toes with an ivory-handled crop. She jumped gaily to her feet, took off her hat, a saucy tricorne with a gold cockade, and made a low bow.

"I am grateful," she announced. "It was sheer inspiration that made you ask mama to drive. We have

been having words on the subject of my Cavalier d'Alencourt. Mama thinks I ought to settle down. Isn't that absurd? Charming afternoon, isn't it? Hope you'll find it so. Mama is in an execrable humor, and here she is."

Mrs. Lord appeared, followed by a footman bearing cushions, smelling-salts, and Reggie, growling protests.

"H'm," she said, catching sight of her daughter and stopping short. "Insubordinate!" Then, turning with a radiant smile to the vicomtesse, she nodded with an odd, familiar dignity. "Thank your horoscope, or whatever it is you thank when you have cause, that you have no daughter!"

Margot looked up, contrition upon her beautiful, down-drooping mouth, innocence in her eyes, the dimple smoothed away. "I promise you, I will not annoy you any more after this, mother—and I beg your pardon."

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed the old lady, "will the sky fall? Will the river run inland? Margot, upon my soul, you are extraordinary! Cease your joking. Ha! ha! Since when do we ask pardon—not you or I, whatever else we do. 'Pardon'! What a farce! Good for servants and abbés—it's their profession! Ride your insane horse till he breaks your neck or his, but leave pardons out of the question!"

Mrs. Wysong-Lord settled herself in the carriage, Reggie upon her arm, looked a reluctantly affectionate good-bye to the vision of loveliness framed in the doorway, and turned to the vicomtesse. "After all, she is beautiful! and what right have I—have you—has any one, to demand more of her? When she is forty, we shall have the privilege of requiring wit, but not till then, and she will have it long before, or she wouldn't be her mother's daughter!"

Jeanne acknowledged the remark, absently. She could not force her lips to frame the vapid sentences of temporary conversation. She was choked with emotion, dumb with apprehension. What if, after all, her efforts

should be fruitless? She was spared the torture of small talk, for Mrs. Lord, taking the matter in her own hands, conversed with picturesque fluency upon local interests—neighbors, roads, incomes, taxes, peasants and stewards, showing an astonishing fund of information and an almost masculine grasp of each subject.

The smiling landscape changed its aspect as they neared the sea. Fishing-boats appeared upon the river, over the towns a veil of drying nets hung swaying in the breeze. An occasional gust of salt air tore the milder inland atmosphere.

Over Mrs. Wysong-Lord crept a subtle change. She sat erect, no longer lolling with easy nonchalance. Her language became stilted, less fluent. Her comments lost their cynic wit, her tones grew softly modulated. Something in her appearance underwent a transformation. The brilliant light of her eyes dimmed, the lines about her mouth softened and relaxed, a primness pursed her lips, where the rouge appeared suddenly out of place. The high arch of her blackened brows drooped, two deep lines forming above the nose. Character, the invisible, all-powerful artist, remodeled face, body, and manner, till before Jeanne's startled eyes, another woman was disclosed—a strangely incongruous creature, with Puritan eyes, overdone refinement, pinched lips and studied politeness, decked out in rouge and powder, loaded with jewels, swathed in extravagant finery, belaced, hair-dressed, perfumed—a personality impossible to describe.

As the victoria neared Coligny, the vicomtesse gathered her courage. Mrs. Lord was speaking. "My daughter's health and spirits have greatly improved since we took possession of your charming—"

"My dear lady," the vicomtesse interrupted, "you have never taken possession of that house! It has taken possession of you—taken possession of every one of you!"

Mrs. Lord turned, startled by the vehement accents.

"Why, in what way? I do not understand," she murmured, vaguely.

Jeanne caught Mrs. Lord's hand with a convulsive grip, as if by physical effort she might hold her, keep her from merging into the usurping personality.

"Listen—listen carefully. I must tell you the whole history; then you must judge for yourself. It's perfectly unprecedented, perfectly impossible, what I have to tell you, and, believe me, I did not let you go into the danger knowingly. No one, since the events of which I am going to speak, has ever occupied the villa, and who could have guessed, who could have dreamed of this visitation!"

Mrs. Lord gazed blankly at her companion. Then fear crept into her eyes. She glanced apprehensively at the lonely road, then with a sigh of relief, at the stalwart backs of the footmen.

Jeanne repressed a hysterical laugh.

"No, I'm not mad. Don't be frightened—at least, not anything so ordinary as an everyday maniac. But, listen, *La Bonbonnière* was built for Gabrielle de Malèvique. She was very much admired by Louis XV.—you know how it was in those days. It was an honor—the king could do no wrong. She had a daughter, the loveliest creature that ever lived, but utterly ungovernable as her mother had been—as her father was. The duchesse—the king gave her that title—was—er—very fond of high play, and wine, and music, in which she excelled. With her in *La Bonbonnière* lived her sister, Antoinette, and the Abbé Peudal—her confessor and abettor in all her freaks of fancy—you know what the abbés of that time were. Peudal was no exception; on the contrary, a typical example. *La Bonbonnière* was a very gay little candy-box, indeed. They had a band of musicians, who gave daily concerts. They kept open house for cards. The duchesse made no effort to control her daughter, who loved the chase, her liberty, and the companionship of the wildest gallants of the court."

A dawn of comprehension lighted the pale eyes of Mrs. Lord—uncertainty, fear, resistance.

Jeanne pushed her advantage.

"The king," she went on, "took the deepest interest in his beautiful daughter—the reckless, the fascinating, the untamable, little savage, Diane. A marriage was arranged with the Duc d'Alencourt, the great-great-great-grandfather of Geoffrey. He was madly in love with her, as his descendant is to-day with your daughter. Don't you understand?"

Jeanne read conviction in her companion's terrified eyes.

"She had shrugged her shoulders and acquiesced, the lovely daughter of the king. Then, without warning, whether from mere whimsical contrariness, love of intrigue, or because she really loved the man, she eloped—ran away with a worthless young scapegrace, of excellent family and impossible character. None ever knew what became of them. They disappeared completely. There is a tradition that they went to Canada, and settled near Quebec, but it was never authenticated.

"Ah; you see what I mean; I know you realize it now! They have come back in you, in Margot, in your whole household! You have been pushed aside—they have made themselves manifest—perhaps not even their true spirits, but some persistent part of the atmosphere they created has accomplished this. It is a mystery within a mystery. But now you are yourself again—and you must act! You cannot allow this to go on—this unnatural, this uncanny illusion. You must fight for yourselves, your very souls! Fight? No!—flight, is the only thing! Can one fight supernatural forces? Or, if it be natural, can one resist infection in the very air one breathes? You must go—all of you, and at once—at once!"

"To America, to Quebec!" Mrs. Lord repeated, mechanically. Across her face a hundred expressions passed. A terrible struggle was taking place—a fight for supremacy, a duel of impulses.

With terror and amazement the vicomtesse watched. On the older woman's forehead beads of perspiration gathered, her body was tense as a bow-string drawn, her stiffened fingers clutched Jeanne's hand with the grip of suffering. The wrinkled face was hard as stone and marble-white. On the livid cheeks, the rouge showed in blotches.

In silence the battle was fought—and won. Slowly the usurping personality lost its hold, the convulsive changes became less frequent, less intense. The lines of pain vanished, the body relaxed. For a moment, her eyelids closed from excessive weariness. Then she leaned forward suddenly, apparently unconscious of what had just happened.

"Let us go home at once," she gasped. "We will leave to-morrow!"

The vicomtesse lay back with a sigh of exhaustion and relief. They drove on—it seemed for hours. Jeanne looked up. The scenes around them had grown familiar, they were nearing the outskirts of the village. Soon they would be within the enchanted circle, upon the dangerous ground! A new fear seized her. She should have kept Mrs. Lord at a distance—have telegraphed her party to join her. Would she fall back again under the spell?

She watched her, eagerly. There were no outward signs of the long dead duchesse. It was still Mrs. Wysong-Lord, anxious, frightened and puzzled, who sat beside her, nervously tearing the lace from her handkerchief. Closer they came, and closer—in at the park gates, beneath the ancient trees, up the stately avenue, at last, within sight of La Bonbonnière itself.

With her whole heart Jeanne prayed, her hands clasped beneath the lap robe, her eyes fixed on the face of her guest. The dreaded change did not come.

They stopped. The footman descended. Hastily Mrs. Lord freed herself from robes and cushions. Reggie was tumbled unceremoniously

to the ground, where he whined shrilly. The vicomtesse followed, the fear of some unknown calamity heavy upon her.

"Where is Margot?" she heard Mrs. Lord inquire, anxiously. "I wish to speak with her at once. Tell her to come to me."

The servant bowed.

"Miss Margot has not yet returned from her ride," he answered. "She went out with Mr. de Montalou, shortly after madame. She begged that madame should not be anxious in case she were a little late."

"Montalou! Not anxious!" cried Mrs. Lord. She turned to the vicomtesse and stretched forth a shaking hand. "Do you suppose—? Could it be!"

Jeanne's face was sufficient answer. Filled with a new dread, the two ladies hurried into the house, up the stairs, through the rose boudoir, where the Watteau canvases laughed at them from the walls, to the dainty white-and-gold room that had been the case of that jewel of beauty—Margot.

The jewel was gone—stolen! On the dressing-table lay a note, neatly sealed with the Montalou arms.

*CHÈRE MAMAN:* I know you've set your heart on d'Alencourt, so it is no use arguing with you. I've married Roland, so *au revoir*.

Your dutiful  
MARGOT.

Underneath was added in pencil, the last verse of "Belle Isambour":

*Or n'est il homme avec pouvoir,  
Qui peut encor qu'il voye bien cler,  
Engarder sa fille d'aymer;  
C'est a luy folie en parler.*

For a flash the soul of the duchesse asserted itself. Mrs. Wysong-Lord laughed, cynically.

"*Tiens!* Roland will be surprised when he finds whom he has really married. I hope he'll like her."

There were tears in the eyes of the Vicomtesse Jeanne.

"Poor d'Alencourt," she said; "the end of the song!"

## MATINS

**A**WAKE! the Dawn is on the hills.  
Behold! at her cool throat a rose;  
Blue-eyed and beautiful she goes,  
Leaving her steps in daffodils.  
Awake! arise! and let me see  
Thine eyes, whose deeps epitomize  
All dawns that were or are to be,  
O Love, all heaven in thine eyes!  
Awake! arise! come down to me!

Behold! the Dawn is up; behold!  
How all the birds around her float,  
Wild rills of music, note on note,  
Spilling the air with mellow gold.  
Arise! awake! and, drawing near,  
Let me but hear thee and rejoice!  
Thou, who bear'st captive, sweet and clear,  
All song, O Love, within thy voice!  
Arise! awake! and let me hear!

See, where she comes, with limbs of day,  
The Dawn! with wild-rose hands and feet,  
Within whose veins the sunbeams beat,  
And laughterers meet of wind and ray.  
Arise! come down! and, heart to heart,  
Love, let me clasp in thee all these!  
The sunbeam, of which thou art part,  
And all the rapture of the breeze!  
Arise! come down! loved that thou art!

MADISON CAWEIN.



## HE MAKES EXCUSE FOR HIM

**P**ARKER—Your pastor doesn't practise what he preaches.

**T**UCKER—He hasn't the time. My pastor writes his own sermons.



## SHE HAD HER DOUBTS

**H**E—I have a future before me.

**S**HE—But are you quite sure there is enough of it to atone for your past?

## CHILDREN

## THE GIRL-CHILD

Give her a flower to keep and hold,  
 A waxen doll in a silken gown,  
 A chain of coral with clasp of gold,  
 A tiny kitten as soft as down;  
 And sing, with your lips against her cheek,  
 Love's dear lullaby whispering,  
 Till sleep comes over her eyelids meek,  
 Sing for the girl-child—mother, sing!

## THE BOY-CHILD

Show him the bird in its daring flight  
 To the cloud's brown edge. Teach him to know  
 The flag that spreads to winds' wild night—  
 Sweep of the rain, and whirl of snow—  
 Laugh with him, run with him, romp and leap,  
 Give him his will of the noisy day—  
 But, when you pause at the gate of sleep,  
 Oh, pray for the boy-child—mother, pray!

MADELINE BRIDGES.



## TO THE WIDOW

LOVER—You, you see, are the only woman I ever loved.  
 LADY—Oh, I can't believe that.  
 "But it's true; the others were all girls."



## QUITE SATISFIED

TRAMP (*to farmer*)—Can yer give me a job, sir?  
 FARMER—No.  
 TRAMP (*with feeling*)—Thank yer, sir.

# THE DEAD MAN WINS

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF CONSTANTINE DIX

By Barry Pain

**B**INGHAM sacked his third foot-man. The fellow had got as drunk as an owl, and had been insolent. He had no character and he was a fool, so he came to London. There he hung about the docks, and spent what little money he had, and got into bad company. Ikey got hold of him. One night when Ikey had nothing better to do, he made the idiot drunk, and, while he was drunk, he told the plain truth about Bingham and the diamonds. I heard of it from Ikey the next day when he had found religion, and wanted to lead quite a new life. I am glad to say that I had friends who put him in the way of some honest work. The information about Bingham I thought would be of use to me.

If you inquire at Scotland Yard, where my name is known, they will tell you that I am engaged in rescue work and do a lot of good. They will probably add that I have independent means, and am frequently imposed upon. It may be so. I am not at all anxious that Scotland Yard should change its mind on the subject.

I am not attached to any particular denomination, but I trust that I am sympathetic with all of them. The Catholics have great hopes of winning me in the end; so also have the Non-conformists. Many an Anglican clergyman has told me that he wished the Church included in its folds more such workers as myself. I go about a great deal among the criminal classes in the poorest part of London. I give them not only excellent advice and spiritual consolation, but material help in

money or food when times are bad, and sometimes I hear of things from them which I think are likely to be useful, as in the case of that little information about Bingham.

I am also, as you may have conjectured, a thief. I have been a thief for many years. I have never been in prison, and I do not propose to go there. It is not really necessary if one will only follow a few simple rules. To begin with, I have never in my life possessed anything which the police would call a house-breaking implement. Explanation of one's presence, uninvited, in another man's house at midnight is only rendered more difficult if a box of silent matches, a jemmy, a drill and a revolver are found in one's possession. Without such tools it is impossible to attempt the opening of a good safe; but I never attempt the opening of a good safe. My pocket-knife contains all the tools that I require; and the place of a revolver is taken by what appears to be a simple cigarette. When I am taken, I trust that I shall behave civilly and like a gentleman; and I have no doubt that the officer will permit me one last smoke on my way to the station. Then that cigarette will come in, and that officer and myself will get a pretty object-lesson in the use of high explosives. Unfortunately, we shall not live to profit by it. I have never had a confederate, and I very rarely make use of a receiver; the only receiver whom I have ever used lives in Brussels, does not know my right name and address, is under the impression that I am a diamond-merchant, and would not dream of receiving stolen

goods if he knew that he was doing so. It is a rule of my life that the successful thief must in all possible respects live like an honest man. No dishonesty except on business. I have twice found valuable property in the street, and on both occasions I took it to Scotland Yard. I am one of the few persons now living who has never even attempted to cheat a railway company. I never avoid the police, and they are happily convinced of my philanthropic motives in associating with bad characters. I never drink intoxicating liquor, unless I mean to get intoxicated. This simple rule alone would have saved many men the sacrifice of their freedom. I do not believe in unnecessary risks, cumbersome loot, numbered notes, overruling ambitions or extravagance in living. If it is objected to me that I only go for the soft things, my vanity is not wounded and my common sense is complimented. I am investing my money as I make it, for I do not want to work all my life.

I am then a lay-preacher and an habitual thief. You will add that I am a hypocrite; frankly, I do not know whether I am or not. I speak the truth here; the publication of these memoirs will occur only when the truth can no longer injure me. And I say with truth that I am thoroughly in earnest in my rescue work. I have pleaded with these men with tears in my eyes; I have never preached without believing every word that I said. The police could point out to you men whom I have reformed—men who are now living honestly and in good positions through my help. I can help others but not myself. That I believe to be predestined. I accept the case as it is, and do not worry myself with introspection.

When Ikey—not for the first or second time—found religion, he naturally came to me. He told me what he had heard from Bingham's dismissed servant, and admitted that but for his regeneration he would probably at that moment have been looking for Bingham's diamonds. He seemed very

thankful, and his whole face was radiant. I regret to say that about a year later he again fell into evil courses.

The story that Bingham's footman—his name was Evans—brought to Ikey was rather curious. Sir Charles Bingham, as everybody knows, made his money in South Africa. His house at Weybridge was interesting, and stood in picturesque grounds. Bingham was rather proud of the place. He was at this time a man of forty and unmarried. He was fond of entertaining, and generally had visitors in the house while he was there. In the dining-room, the service door was screened off by a tall, four-fold leather screen. One night, after dinner, the butler stood behind that screen, and heard what Bingham was saying to one of his guests. It was nice, useful information, and the butler acted upon it next day. The shares went up with a rush, the butler retired on his profits, and Evans got to hear about it. After that, Evans used to be rather fond of standing unseen behind that leather screen when the ladies had gone and the men were talking. He heard a good deal. He acquired quite a collection of humorous, though slightly indelicate, stories, but he never heard Sir Charles say that anything was good to buy for a quick rise—possibly Sir Charles had his suspicions in the case of the butler.

One night Evans heard a guest—whom he always spoke of as the colonel—say to Bingham:

“What about those diamonds? Got them here still?”

Sir Charles said that he had.

“You'll lose them for a certainty,” said the colonel. “Why don't you send them to your banker, or at least keep them in a good, strong safe?”

“I don't send them to the bank because I am interested in them and like to look at them. To my mind they are as pretty as flowers. I don't keep them in a safe because to do that would be practically to tell the burglar where to look for them, and the best safe is of no use against the cleverest burglar. My system is all right. At any rate, I have not lost them yet.”

"Where are they now?" the colonel asked.

"In my pocket. You can have a look at them, if you like."

Evans also would have liked—very much liked—to have had a look at them, but he dared not show his head round the edge of the screen. He could hear the crackle of paper being unfolded and murmurs of admiration and astonishment.

"And where will they be to-night?" said the colonel.

"I shall hide them somewhere or other as usual. I am the last man to go to bed in this house, and as a rule I hide them just before going to bed. It's rather amusing to think of new places."

"It's absolutely childish," said the colonel. "How would you like me to go and look for them to-night?"

"You can, if you like," said Sir Charles, "on one condition. They shall be hidden in a place accessible to you, and, if you have got them at breakfast-time to-morrow, you may keep them. If you have not got them, you will pay me a sovereign."

"Good!" said the colonel. "I think I would take five thousand to one about anything on the face of this earth. You will lose your diamonds to-night."

"Think so?" said Sir Charles, and changed the subject.

The colonel did not go to bed that night. At breakfast-time, he handed his host a sovereign, and was told where the diamonds had been hidden. They had been under the coals in the scuttle in the colonel's bedroom.

Evans now felt that the diamonds were practically in his pocket. Every night he determined to hunt for them. Fortunately, or unfortunately for him, his elation and the strain on his nerves led him to drink, and before a week was over he had been dismissed.

This was the story that Ikey told me, and on the following day I bought a very nice hand-camera, and went down to Weybridge.

I took a cab at Weybridge station, and stopped it at the lodge to inquire

if Sir Charles were likely to be at home. I then went on up to the house. I gave the butler my card with my correct name and address on it. The commonest mistake that an uneducated thief makes is to use an alias when no alias is necessary. I asked the man to take my card to Sir Charles and request permission for an amateur to make one or two photographs in his grounds for a private collection. I waited in the big, square hall. I had only two or three minutes before Sir Charles appeared, but I do not think the diamonds were hidden in the hall.

Sir Charles came out from the drawing-room. He was a big, fat, lazy-looking man, with his hands thrust into the pockets of his light Norfolk jacket. He seemed to be slightly annoyed—at which I was not surprised—and eyed me up and down quickly. He was an ugly man, and seemed a strong man.

"Afternoon," said Sir Charles. "It's you that wants to photograph my place?"

"If you would be kind enough to give me the permission."

"I say, you know, I never heard of such a thing! It's not for any paper, is it? They are always bothering me, and I won't have it—I simply won't have it. See?"

"I have no connection with the press whatever. A friend of mine, General Tomlinson, came here some time ago to see you about a footman who had been in your employ—a man called Evans. You were away at the time, but my friend noticed the remarkable beauty of the place, knowing my photographic hobby, and—"

Sir Charles broke in impatiently.

"Evans was a drunken scamp. I told him he would have no character, and it was no good to send anybody to me." But I could see that the appreciation of his place had moved him rather. "Still," he went on, "I don't know why you shouldn't photograph if you want to. It is rather a pretty spot, so they tell me. It's quite understood that it is simply for your own private collection."

"Certainly, Sir Charles, simply for that, though I should hope to have the pleasure of sending you copies, of course."

"Thanks," said Sir Charles. He paused a moment, irresolute, and then snatched up an aged panama hat. "Come along," he said, "I'll show you some of the best bits."

I took two or three photographs in the garden, and afterward some time-exposures of different rooms in the house. It was easy enough with a little more flattery to lead from the one thing to the other; in fact, it was Sir Charles himself who suggested that I should photograph in the house. He became very civil, and wanted me to have a whiskey-and-soda with him before I went. I refused, of course.

The photographs turned out very well. I sent him a complete set of them, afterward, and he wrote to thank me. As soon as I was safely back in my cab, I drew from my pocket the wisp of green paper which I had taken from behind the tall clock in the dining-room. I unfolded it with the greatest care. It contained a few tacks.

I confess to some slight feeling of disappointment, it was not irritation; I did not swear, and I may say here that I have never used a profane word in my life. I had not got the diamonds, but I had got a variety of useful information. I knew for instance that alarm guns were used, and I had been able to see where the wires were stretched at night on the lawn and across the drive. I also knew, for Sir Charles himself had told me, that he considered a holly-hedge seven feet in height, and about three feet through, to be burglar-proof, which is not the case. The photographs which I had taken were themselves of use in enabling me to find my way about. So I was not impatient.

Having thought out my plan of action, I went down to Weybridge about a week later. I had left my motor-car at Guildford with instructions that I should come up from London to fetch it early on the morning of the following day. I reached Weybridge at about

seven in the evening, and went straight to the fields at the back of Bingham's grounds. I examined the holly-hedge, marked the best spot, and then went into the town to dine. I returned at ten, and got to work at once: I could see that there were still lights in the house, but I was out of sight and I made little or no noise. With the aid of the implements and my pocket-knife, I had, by eleven o'clock, made a hole in the hedge through which I could crawl. Holly is after all very easy to handle if you have intelligence and thick gloves. The full moon was now coming up, and I think I could have detected any of the wires, at any rate, on the gravel. But as a measure of precaution I walked principally on the flower-beds; flower-beds are never wired. There seems to be a prevalent belief that a burglar would hesitate to break a geranium or fuchsia. This is not the case. I walked round the house in safety till I got to the porch. I should imagine that this was ten or eleven feet high, with a square roof to it, supported on pillars. From the top of this porch, access was easy to the window of a little room which Sir Charles had described to me as his own study. I had made a photograph of this room at his special request; it seemed to be his favorite room, and I thought there was a fair chance that here I should find the diamonds. In studying my photograph of the room, I was particularly struck by a tall bookcase, reaching from floor to ceiling, and covering the middle third of one of the walls. It occurred to me that Sir Charles Bingham might possibly consider the space behind the books to be a good hiding-place.

I had already examined the ladders, and had found them extremely well chained and locked. The lock would have presented no great difficulty to me, but there was very likely some electrical alarm attached. The place where they were kept was suspicious, and I did not like it, so I left the ladders alone, and trusted to my skill in throwing the noose and in climbing a rope to get me to the top of the porch.

The rope I was carrying in a coil under my waistcoat. I succeeded at the first attempt in noosing a projection of the parapet that ran round the roof of the porch. Funnily enough, I did not like this; things were going too easily; that always makes me suspicious. However, up I went and tried the study window. It was bolted, and, when I slipped my knife in and forced back the spring, it went with a snap that might have aroused the seven sleepers. I lay flat on my face in the shadow and waited. I could not hear a sound, and not a glimmer of light appeared anywhere. Again I felt that I had been too lucky. I slid the lower sash of the window softly upward, and stepped into the room. I could see the bookcase clearly in the moonlight, and put my hand at hazard behind a row of handsomely bound volumes on the middle shelf. My hand came down on a soft chamois-leather bag. I could feel the diamonds in it. I was absolutely certain that I had got them, and as certain that I should not keep them. This last stroke of luck frightened me.

As I withdrew my hand with the chamois bag in it, it struck against a little knob that slid back easily, and immediately the bookcase began to move. I guessed what had happened. The bookcase screened an entrance into another room and moved easily, though very slowly, by some mechanical device. I had inadvertently struck my hand against the knob which set the machinery in motion. Almost immediately, I saw a thin streak of light running half-way up the wall and gradually widening. The next room was therefore lighted. I felt in my waistcoat-pocket to see if that special cigarette to be used in cases of desperation was still in its proper place, and then stood back in the shadow and awaited events. The bookcase moved back until it disclosed a full-sized doorway, but with no door in it, and through this the light streamed into the room where I was standing. And with the

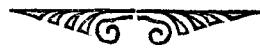
light there came a strong scent of lilies and gardenias, heavy and oppressive.

All this had happened in absolute silence, except for the slight grunting of the machinery as the bookcase moved. I stood and waited, counting very slowly in my head. I counted up to five hundred, and still there was no sound of movement from the next room. The silence indeed seemed to be more intense than ever. I stepped out of my corner and into the lighted doorway.

This room was a bedroom. On a small, and I should say cheap, iron bedstead in the middle of the room lay the dead body of Sir Charles. I shall not describe him; a fat man does not look pretty when he is dead. The half-closed eyes seemed to be looking straight at me. The windows were heavily curtained, and on the bed itself and on the floor were masses of white flowers; the electric light was full on and, in addition, a row of tall candles blazed at the head of the bed. I drew the chamois-leather bag from my pocket, and emptied out the diamonds into the palm of my hand. They were few in number but magnificent in size and quality. I should say that the colonel had decidedly underestimated them when he put their value at five thousand pounds.

I put the diamonds back in the bag, advanced toward the body, and put the bag with the diamonds in it in the horrible, pasty hand of the dead man. Then I went out.

With the living it is another affair, but the dead man wins, so far as I am concerned. I would not that night have taken one farthing from him for any consideration. I found my way back safely to the field, and wandered about for hours until the dawn came. A little later, I got an early train on to Guildford, but I did not take the motor-car back to London at once. I went to the principal hotel and ordered a bedroom. I needed rest. And it had also become necessary for me to get intoxicated.



## A MEMORY OF NICARAGUA

By Joaquin Miller

YOU lift your face to ask of her,  
This wine-hued woman, warm sun-maid,  
Who loved, who dared, was not afraid—  
Or Princess? Priestess? Prisoner?  
I never knew or sought to know;  
I cared not what she might have been;  
I only knew she was such queen  
As only death could overthrow.

I loved, loved purely, loved profound,  
I raised love's temple, round by round.  
I built my temple heavens high,  
Then shut the door, and she and I  
Forgot all things, all things save one,  
Beneath the hot path of the sun.

I would I could forget, and yet  
I would not to my death forget.  
I reared my temple to the sky,  
That glad full moon, and laughed that I  
Could toy with lightning, till I found,  
Like some poor fool who toys with fire,  
And counts him stronger than desire,  
My temple burning to the ground.

Aye, I had knelt, as priest might kneel  
Before his saint's shrine, all that day;  
Had dared to count me strong as steel  
To stand for aye, clean, tall and white.  
Yet I broke in that very night,  
And stole shewbread and wine away.

I would forget that scene, that place,  
I would forget that pleading face,  
Yet hide it deepest in my heart,  
As coffin in the heart of earth—  
Alas! a heart so little worth—  
Locked iron doors and somber lid!  
Yea, I would have my shrine so hid,  
So sacred and so set apart,  
That only I might enter in,  
Each sleepless, penitential night,  
And, kneeling, burn my lorn love light  
To burn away my bitter sin.

# CUPID IN SABLES

By Kate Jordan

(Mrs. F. M. Vermilye)

THE little hidden-away street where Dolly had rented a room edged on Washington Square. To be "cheek by jowl" with this aristocratic quadrangle counted for nothing; just the turning of the corner made a gulf between the two. The Square seemed always turning away its head; the little street seemed turning up its nose. The Square had no acquaintance of any sort with the little street; the little street did not care a pin. It was frankly a happy vagabond, boasting of one old furniture-shop, one old book-shop, a delicatessen-shop and a French circulating-library whose windows were bright with *chic*, Parisian posters. All the houses on it were rented piecemeal to poor artists who were happy to fancy that the little street resembled the rue des Saints Pères, and, dreaming of Paris as they leaned from their windows in the vaporous, Spring twilights, they were not interested in, and did not envy, the victorias and broughams they saw pause before the staid, red-brick mansions glittering along the Square.

Dolly came eastward between the green grass-plots one Spring afternoon, four small parcels in her arms. She had been in a dusty, ink-spattered office in Park Row since the morning. Now, tired, happy, shabby, expectant, hungry, without one full dollar in her purse, without a cloud on her soul, her heart singing, her lips smiling, she was hurrying home to the square room on the top floor back of a rakish little house on the little street that did not care a pin.

It was hard to unlock the door with her dinner in her arms, but she succeeded after a little trouble, and stepped in to find the sunset over the clothes-lines transfiguring her room to a pastel in red wash. She took off her hat, and pushed the cheese-cloth curtains at the window further apart, and stood with her face lifted to the light.

She was an unusual type. Seen among a throng, her face was like an orchid among garden flowers. Her charm was a puzzling, irritating quality born of the defects rather than the prettiness, and two people rarely defined it alike. She might please much or little, but she could not be ignored. She was always attentively watched. Her head was as smooth and lustrous as a mouse's coat and of the same pale, nutmeg shade which seemed to melt into lighter tones to supply the *bisque* of her skin; her features were negative in modeling, yet pleasing; her small, deeply curved mouth the palest coral, gray-pink at times, with little flecks of golden down at the corners; long, ash-blond lashes fringed her oddly slanting eyes of the most dreamy, misty, vivid blue. As she looked at the sunset, she smiled a little to one side, the soft, curled lashes veiling her eyes. There was something sphinx-like about the little face. She might have posed for the mystery of woman as she stood so, the splendid red flare bathing her. A sigh came with the thought that it was almost a challenge to misfortune for a human being to be quite as happy as she was, and it was almost appalling to think that in

another hour she would be still happier, if that were possible.

She began to unwrap the packages. From one of the papers, she took a triangle of Port du Salut, from another, a bottle of claret, from another, a head of young, green lettuce, curly and crisp to the point of unreality, as if it had tumbled from an idyllic water-color, from another, a small quantity of mushrooms.

"What a blessing it is to be a born cook," said Dolly, her finger on her lip; "with the creamed oysters, toast and coffee added to these, it will be a birthday dinner such as never was—and, oh, the dear will lecture me deliciously for extravagance."

She got out of her street clothes hurriedly, and into a new gown of pink, sprigged muslin, of nun-like simplicity.

"Oh, Tommy, Tommy Atkins—" she kept humming, and, catching up a crayon, she began making large capitals on the brown wrapping that held the cheese:

"DINNER AT SEVEN.  
EXCELLENT TABLE D'HÔTE.  
SURPASSING COFFEE.  
NO MUSIC."

She put a large pin through the top of this, and stepped into the hall. This upper space had once been the attic; the stairway came up in the centre, and five doors pierced the square around it. Dolly tiptoed to the one opposite her own. Midway on the panels there was a small, brass plate with a name on it—"Victor Trent." Just above this, she pinned the paper, and was about to knock, preparatory to a speedy flight, when the door was pulled suddenly back, and a man who was coming out stood still. He was young, strongly and gracefully made, his face boyish. His hair was a sleek, lustrous black, his eyes a soft, yet dominant brown. At this moment, he was half-shaven, a razor in one hand, one cheek of pallid smoothness, the other a mass of bubbly, white lather. He wore a loose-belted blouse which hung open, showing his throat, and his ex-

pression was one of blank amazement. They stared for a moment, and then both laughed.

"Of course, you had to open the door and spoil my advertising scheme," Dolly said, edging away.

"Of course," said Victor, "you had to cramp my style by this unexpected and amazing liberty. I meant to be so beautiful to-night—but you'll never forget this mug."

"May a lady ask if you meant to wander from your own fireside that way?" Dolly asked, her head on the side, as she still backed toward her own door.

"I meant to look from the hall window at the church clock in order to be on time"—he smiled over the soap—"as my watch is still on a visit to Uncle Goldberg. How was I to know that on my very threshold I'd run into a bill-poster?" He tore down the announcement, and glared at it with rolling eyes. "No music?" he snorted, starting back and brandishing the razor. "Ah, heaven, unsay those words. No music—no 'Margarita,' no 'Under the Bamboo Tree,' no Bill Bailey asked to come home, no 'Hiawatha'—ah, ah, it is too much, too much!" He staggered back with a smothered cry, and shut the door to the sound of Dolly's laughter.

As she was about to reenter her own room, the German janitress called from the foot of the stairs:

"Miss Smith, a letter just come for you alretty mit ten cents to pay. Ach, how some peoples are snide on their letters, ain't it?"

Dolly went down a few steps, and leaned over the banisters.

"I'll give you the pennies in the morning when I pay for the milk," she smiled, and received the London letter from the pudgy hand.

When she was again in her own room, she took the precaution of locking the door before opening the envelope:

15 HALF MOON STREET,  
LONDON.

MY DEAR DOROTHEA:

The small sum you asked for I enclose. Are you sure it is enough? How can you

possibly exist on so little money? Do let me send you on some thousands for an emergency. Dear Dorothea, if you should fall ill! The thought haunts me at night. You may regard my suggestions as superfluous, for, in a way, though your mother's lifelong friend, I am your paid dependent—but really—really—you ought to come home. Your place is here. Your social duties are here. You don't want to be called eccentric—do you? No young woman does. But this mysterious absence in America, this assumed name, this juggling with poverty is—well, really it might be called sensational—such a thing as those awful newspaper women do and then write about. Have you not had enough of the adventure by this time? Hasn't your reckless, impatient mood died a natural death? What can I say more? I am distressed to think of you, a Lanesborough, doing this wild thing, and trust you will return to your own world without delay.

Meanwhile, I assure you I have kept your secret absolutely. Bailey & Pimlo were most reasonable, and did not press me for particulars. As you directed, they will let your income accumulate, awaiting your orders, and as the balance you left in the bank in my name has hardly been touched by you, it would appear that I shall not have to apply to them for money for some time. Your Uncle Benjamin was almost rude to me when I refused to give him your address. He has gone to Homburg, very angry. Oh, my dear Dorothea, what in the world are you doing? Pray don't let your originality or whatever name you have for it, lead you to make a grave mistake. I shall await your next letter with much anxiety.

Faithfully yours,

EMILY OSGOOD.

P. S.—Surely you won't go on the stage.

Dolly fingered the letter, her vaporous, blue eyes looking dreamily into the dusk. She saw London on a foggy day, the sun a copper disk; phantasmal squares; the ghosts of hansoms; she heard smothered sounds as from a world shut in by mist. She saw her home on Half Moon street, a bijou mansion, where fires twinkled and flowers made perfume and color in dusky corners; it was like a padded, scented case for a jewel of great price. In a mental chiaroscuro, she had a vision of herself in lace and pearls at the opera, of her carriage in the Park, the scarlet liveries, the powdered heads, herself weary and exquisite under a rose-colored parasol; she saw the pause at the rail, the chat of the marionettes of fashion, monocled and

listless—the sameness which had become irritation, the surfeit which had become revolt, until the decisive moment rang through her life, and from the men who had knelt in worship of her money, from the boredom of filling every hour with its allotted, dry and scentless pleasure, she had sped away.

That the result was happiness was evident as Dolly, after putting away her letter with its money-order for twenty pounds, prepared her dinner. Her eyes were shining, dauntless, and she laughed as she sang.

"Dear Emily Osgood," she said, aloud, as she stirred the mushrooms, "if you could see me now, you'd really faint. Poor Emily, whom nobody will ever love!"

When all was ready for the dinner, the room showed prettily in the mixture of lingering dusk and unshaded candle-light. Dolly never used the gas. She had bought four plain glass candlesticks; when she had a guest, she lighted candles in the four; when she wrote or read, two were sufficient; when she sat and dreamed, one burned like a star before a plaster bust of Petrarch's "Laura." She was never without a pot of flowers; an outlay of fifty cents kept her window-sill green for months. Her table was of the kitchen variety, painted white. Her bed was a divan with jade-green cotton cover and pillows. A large folding screen, made of Eastern matting painted with brown grasses, hid her dressing-bureau; that it was originally a clothes-horse, covered and painted by herself, did not appear. Her few cups, saucers, and plates were cheap, but of harmonious design and coloring. In fact, the back room, holding nothing that cost much in dollars and cents, was rich in esthetic selection.

Dolly's excursion among the poor had taught her one wonderful thing—that poverty does not necessarily mean ugliness. Those born with a sense of beauty and a desire for it, must have it, and carry it and create it in whatever spot they make their home through the valley of the shadow of

penury. It was this thought that made Victor pause after entering, his hand lingering on the knob.

"Green and white,  
Spring and candle-light—"

he murmured, smiling at Dolly, who with her palms flat on the table was nodding at him over a bunch of mignonette.

"Is that your own?" she cried.  
"Don't stop. More—give me more."

"Sunset's flush  
Like a rose's blush—"

He faltered, and added: "Now it's your turn."

"Fill the place," cried Dolly.

"Lacking Dolly's face,  
It would be—"

He paused long.

"Well?" she murmured, as he stood with drawn brows, a finger on his lip, "don't stop just there. That's a horrid place to stop."

"It would be—" he repeated, musingly.

"I'm devoured with curiosity," she said, defiantly. "What would it be without Dolly's face? Something not at all nice, I hope?"

Victor sighed, ponderously.

"I'm very sorry, Dolly, for really all I can think of is:

"Bully place for me!"

"Upon my word," Dolly said, lifting her little head, arrogantly.

"I know that's awful, but the Muse has thrown down her bricks; in other words—she's struck—and it's got to go that way:

"Lacking Dolly's face,  
It would be  
Bully place for me."

"But you don't mean it?" she asked, with insinuating softness.

"Not a bit."

"Then I'll let you have some dinner."

Victor brightened. "I dare say I'll do better after dinner. I'm like Pepys, who says in his diary: 'I'm very cross when I'm empty.'"

He went very close to her and, his face growing serious quickly, looked

down at her. "I'm going to lecture you, Dolly."

"Why?" she asked, her delicate lips smiling, mutinously.

"For spending your hard-earned money. Good heavens, I *see* oysters and I *smell* mushrooms. Are you mad?"

"Oh, I love to be scolded," said Dolly, and added, in a little whisper: "There's claret, too."

"Well, do you know what I call this spread? I call it ostentatious. It's bad taste. It's flaunting your success in my teeth. It tells that penny-dreadful journalism and heart-to-heart talks with fair girl readers about their steady companies pay better than pictures for the funny papers." He thrust his hands in his pockets and frowned tenderly down upon her. "Promise you'll never do it again."

"Not next year, when you're twenty-seven?" she asked, as she took the chair he drew out for her, and began serving the oysters.

He sat down opposite her, and bent over the little table, a passionate question in his eyes.

"Next year! Where will you be then?" His fingers stole across the narrow space till they were very near where her own flickered busily.

"I often think of that," Dolly murmured, color creeping into her cheek and fading quickly, as if a flame had trembled there; "I wonder, too, where you'll be?"

"Wherever you are," he said, with quiet certainty and a long, level gaze.

The words floated about in her brain to a matchless tune. He loved her. She had felt it for months. She was sure of it to-night. She was sure, too, that this was to be the night of nights in her life. He would phrase the passion of his voice, the caress of his eyes. The joy, the wonder of it! What she had sought, she had found. What she had hungered for was to be given to her. Under the ripples of laughter and jest between them, this thought kept rushing over her heart like the still, deep pulse of the sea.

"Now tell me about to-day. How

many sketches have you sold?" Dolly asked, when they had tasted the oysters and pronounced them perfect.

He looked heavily miserable. "The question is painful. The art editors were cold to me to-day," he said, sadly. "In my own room, Dolly, as I drag my pen over cardboard and make lines that become pictures, I have a cozy feeling that Hogarth and I might have been the greatest pals, I feel my work so much like his. When I go out to peddle the stuff, I feel like a homeless cat on a back fence on a wet day."

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Victor! You sold nothing, and yet your work is really good. Are you—are you very unhappy?"

"Not at this moment, with mushrooms in the near perspective," he said with what seemed to her a hard, sad little laugh, while over his boyish face regret settled like a mist.

Love that was both passionate and protective poured from Dolly's eyes upon his bowed, humiliated head and, had he glanced up then, he must have kissed her for it.

"But you are sad sometimes?" she asked, in the littlest, tenderest voice, while putting on his plate some of the largest mushrooms.

Victor nodded sadly, without looking at her. "At night," he said, bitterly, "at dead of night. Oh, the black things come out then and sit around my pillow—and what they say to me of failure, of penury, of renunciation!"

For the first time, Dolly realized fully the vast difference between her poverty masquerade and the real, gnawing fear of the wolf with fangs which is heard nosing the threshold beyond the closed door. Her flesh chilled, a feeling of sickness weighed upon her heart. Wild words trembled on her lips—an offer of assistance, the promise of a future where she could help him develop his talent beyond the gaunt, gray land of Need and Struggle. But she checked herself in time. She could do this for the man who loved her. She could not speak of this to her comrade.

"Good heavens! we're growing mel-

ancholy," Victor cried with his lightest laugh, as he poured some claret into her glass and then into his own. "Ah, Dolly, we mustn't do that. When one's poor, one must cultivate the ideal vagabondage with its laughter in the very teeth of despair. There's always something to be thankful for. Remember that. So, though I have not sold a sketch to-day—nor, indeed, this week—you, my friend, having the lucrative post of Motherly Mazie on the *Young Girls' Needlework Bazaar*, which brings you in twelve dollars per week, are an agreeable thing to contemplate." He lifted his glass. "Here's to Motherly Mazie, long may she advise the young mind on the mysteries of drop-stitch and sentiment, long may she rake in that twelve per."

"Yes," said Dolly, as she sipped and laughed; "I was lucky to get that position. It's so easy. I'll read you a few of the letters I have to answer."

"Do, Mazie, do," said Victor, hilariously; "who knows but that from those pearls of thought I may learn to live a better life?"

The picture Dolly made with the nimbus of candle-light around her sleek, mouse-colored head, her lips curving into amazing nicks and dimples as she read and laughed, her slender throat with a luster upon the flesh showing above the low lace edge of her muslin gown, the glance of her cloudless eyes from the paper to his face, made a supreme invitation to love to which every pulse in Victor's body answered.

"They always send locks of their hair," said Dolly, opening one envelope; "they seem possessed to have you tell them the color of it." She held up a skein of very red hair tied with a pale-blue ribbon.

"I can see her," said Victor; "she thinks blue's her color; she has pink eyelids and splash freckles."

"Now listen to this," cried Dolly, pitching her papers on the table:

"DEAR MOTHERLY MAZIE:

"No doubt you have children of your own, and can advise one who has no mother to go to. I've never loved any one in my life, though I've gone with all sorts of fellows.

There's one that makes me tired, and my sister wants me to marry him. He is all the time sniffling. Do you think I will ever meet a man I can love? Please mention the color of enclosed hair.

"Yours in the depths,  
"GLADYS."

"Next," cried Victor. "I've had enough of Gladys."

"One from 'Too Stout' says her face has a square expression though her features are round. She sends hair, too," said Dolly with a sigh. "But here's one I'll really enjoy answering in my best motherly vein. Listen:

"I've been going with a young man for six months. He is a train-despatcher. The other night, at a social, the conversation turned on getting married. A lady-friend of mine says to him—I put her up to it—she says, 'You are a marrying man, Ed.' He says, 'I guess nit. The girl ain't born that can get me into that con game.' I almost fainted. Shall I ask his intentions? Please advise.

"UNHAPPY PEARL."

"Are you going to tell her to ask him?" Victor laughed.

"No," said Dolly, shaking her little head wisely; "Motherly Mazie advises her to trust and wait."

They laughed again. As she put away the mass of papers, Victor watched her with a new seriousness.

"Dolly," he said suddenly, a dreamy, penetrating note in his voice, "isn't it wonderful that we two should be here alone and happy?—so poor, but happy—using our talents to earn bread as if they were shovel and pick, but happy? Don't you feel sorry for all the sad, heavy rich who sit at dull dinners waited upon by formal flunkies?"

"Are they all dull?" she smiled.

"Society is a big, respectable institution. Anything so absolutely respectable is stagnant. I mean that, if one can't give Conventionality a dig in the ribs now and then, and the old Adam in all of us send out a good, primitive yell without shocking the severely frock-coated and the perfectly corseted, it's dull."

"How do you know so much about society?" she asked, leaning on her elbows, an exquisite guilt for her masquerade filling her face with light.

Victor sat back and sighed.

"Yes, how should I know? I, who paint cartoons for five dollars apiece, and sell precious few of them? How should I know of that lush, stupefying content? Ah, my dear Dolly, I have the artistic clairvoyance and eyes that observe. I see it all so plainly. I've quite summed up the situation."

"Tell me."

"The rich, fashionable people who insist on taking life with a *sauce piquante* have to become freakish. The heavily correct call them fast; they are fast in the sense that they run like the wind away from the others. They eat much more than they need, drink ravenously, flirt feverishly with other people's husbands and wives, travel and dress at a tension, sleep little, read nothing, think nothing, do what they're told they mustn't, just because they oughtn't—all to get away from the dullness of ponderous, moneyed respectability. I don't blame them, do you?"

"Not a bit," said Dolly, with real feeling.

"I dare say if you and I were rich we'd have to join the gang which does the *outré* things, just to make life go with a breeze—wouldn't we?"

"I'm sure of it," said Dolly, her eyes sparkling. "At least I know we'd have to 'blaze our own trail' some way or other—if we were so *very* unfortunate as to be rich."

"But we're not rich," said Victor, his voice vibrating; "if we were, we wouldn't be here now, all alone in this little room, just you and I, without the ghost of a chaperon, shut away from the world as completely as if we were in a moated castle with the drawbridge up. Dolly!" He picked his chair up and planted it vigorously by her side. "Isn't it wonderful? isn't it happiness?" He put his hand closely over hers; she felt it burn and tremble. "It is happiness," he persisted, and bent closer. "I love you very much, dear!"

She tried to speak, but only his name faltered from her lips as he put his arms around her. He kissed her with

hunger and tenderness as he murmured:

"Love that keeps all the choir of lives in chime,  
Love that is blood within the veins of Time.  
Love that is fire within thee and light above  
And lives by grace of nothing but of love."

"Oh, Dolly," he whispered, "we know this love. We are as gods. The world can give nothing greater, nothing sweeter than this."

She drew back a little and looked into his eyes.

"Those last words, Victor—'And lives by grace of nothing but of love,' oh, that's the best of all—isn't it? You love *me*, the woman, Dolly Smith, because of nothing material that I have or represent, you love the something that is *I*—*just I*—these hands, these lips, my touch, my voice. Oh, Victor, that's where the triumph lies for me."

"For both of us," he said, and smiled radiantly; "I have nothing but failure to offer, yet you love me. You are as poor as the little mouse I sometimes liken you to. We are Hunger and Thirst, but, clasped heart to heart, heaven lies about us." He took her hands and kissed each very gently. "God only knows when we can get married. I must 'trust and wait,' dear, too," he murmured with a whimsical little smile. "You will love me well enough to wait for me, Dolly, till I've accomplished what I must?"

Dolly felt stifling. The moment had come for confession. She had had no idea it would be so hard to speak. The Hunger and Thirst picture with heaven about them had the sublime in it, and she was going to pour over the tableau a metallic rain of pounds, shillings and pence. She could be silent a little longer, but it was unnecessary. The act had been played to a superb finish; there was nothing to be done but drop the curtain on it and ring it up on another scene. But she would never forget the poetic pain of her mental farewell to Dolly Smith, Motherly Mazie, Mrs. Schlitzner's top-floor roomer in the little street that did not care a pin.

June 1904

"Is it so hard, Dolly?" Victor asked, breaking in on her silence, his eyes anxious.

She laughed, happily. "Oh, not that—not that, at all. I could wait for you for a lifetime. But—" she left him and walked to the little desk, returning with something hidden behind her—"there's something you must know, Victor, and I want you to promise that you'll forgive me for my silence."

He stood up, his face very white, a vein she had never seen before throbbing between his brows.

"Forgive you? What do you mean? You make me afraid."

"Say you'll forgive me first," she said, touching his arm with her disengaged hand.

He put it away sternly. "You are already married—you've hidden it—you've let me grow to love you," he stammered, hotly and miserably.

"I'm absolutely free. I've never been married," she broke in, clearly and slowly. "No, it's something quite different. I'll risk your being angry—I'll make you forgive me. This is my confession—" She stood with hands behind her, her head a little lowered, like one confessing a wrong done: "I am not poor. I am awfully, hugely, overwhelmingly rich."

She looked up. He was staring at her with a half-awakened expression.

"Rich?" he asked, in stupefaction.

"I'm one of the big, English heiresses. You've seen poor copies of my photographs in the New-York papers many a time. I'm not a beauty, but because I'm an heiress they insist on saying I am, and at this very hour I'm on sale in Bond-street shops, two shillings apiece, at reduced rates by the dozen." She held out a photograph, saying, piteously: "Me."

Victor stared at the picture, which showed her in a riding-habit. Underneath it was printed: "Lady Dolly Lanesborough."

"Titled?" he gasped.

"That, too," she admitted, ruefully; "I'm very sorry."

To her amaze, he fell into a chair,

and burst into reasonless, wild laughter. He stopped suddenly, his face twitching.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "It's like a knock on the head. I think I'm a little hysterical." He dropped his face in his hands, his shoulders heaving. "I never dreamed of such a thing; I never dreamed of this," she heard him murmur.

She knelt beside him and drew his hands from his face. He stared at her with the strangest expression, and again laughed, helplessly.

"Why are you here?" he asked, at length; "it all means something—what?"

"Yes, I'll tell you," said Dolly; "I grew to doubt myself. I grew to believe I could never win a real love. I grew tired seeing men at my feet whom I knew were spending my money in their imagination. To them I was to be a payer of bills—a cheque-book with fingers to write a signature and a heart that didn't count."

Victor listened seriously, attentively. "But you could and did win love for yourself, surely. You are so sweet."

"That's the tragedy of being conspicuously rich. How can you tell what is true, what is false? No, sweet as I am," she smiled, "I believe the golden frame I was set in was so splendid it outrivaled me. Men wooed the frame while lying to me. Once I thought—only a year and a half ago—that an unreckoning, poetic passion was really given me, and I was almost won." Her face was now hot with disdain; "I found out the truth. He had written to a woman—a woman he should have married—that he still loved her, but that his creditors were about to crush him and nothing could save him but a rich marriage. The woman brought the letter to me." She stood up and flung out her arms. "I made up my mind to take a new identity, breathe a new air. I determined to know the real Dolly Lanesborough. I would have time to study her, get into her soul. I would be able to learn her value as a woman, not as

a money-bag. So, I left London secretly. My companion alone knows where I am and something of my experiment. To the rest, I am vaguely traveling. I've only used my own money, and that sparingly, when I was really at lowest ebb before I got the position on the *Bazaar*, for it was not part of my programme to starve. Oh," she said, putting her hands on his shoulders, "it has been as refreshing to my soul as the wind over the Scotch moors has been to my body, jaded after the rack of a London season. You see I have the *wanderlust* in me, the streak of the vagabond, for far back in my family there was a *mésalliance*—a gipsy grandmother who, tradition says, used to steal away now and then from her castle and her stately friends, and go up on the mountain-top, where she'd walk barefoot, roll in the grass, and scream like a savage till the wild mood was past." She bent over him with a cooing kiss. "This was really my screaming and my bare feet. Oh, Victor, this life, where I've met you, has been re-creative. I am happy for the first time."

He met her gaze with a strange, confused expression and sat mute.

"You don't think this fortune spoils our romance, dear, do you?" she asked, with painful wistfulness.

"No, it's not that."

"You love me just the same, and it's the same Cupid, though he wears sables now instead of rags?"

He kissed the hand on his shoulder.

"Yes, dear—oh, yes—forever the same. But there's something I must tell you. I have a secret, too."

"Is it something that will part us?" she whispered in terror.

"I don't think so." He stared at her helplessly, adding, humbly: "I'm rich, too."

"Rich?" she murmured, with in-drawn breath.

"That's just what I said a few moments ago," and he laughed again, a little wildly. "Isn't it like something in a dream that couldn't be real?"

"How rich? What do you mean?" frowned Dolly, who had not laughed.

"I mean, I'm a rich young man, ma'am," he said, with mocking humility; "not as rich as you are—still, rich. I'll break the truth to you gently. I've a personal income of twenty-five thousand a year, and I'm afraid, Miss Smith, I'll have twice that much when my father dies."

At this Dolly drew back from him, and sat down dispiritedly at a distance.

"You're not even an artist," she said, blankly.

"Yes, I am, but I'm a rich one. I must admit, much against my will, that I never tried to sell a cartoon, have never felt like the homeless cat on the back fence I told you about."

"You certainly can tell falsehoods glibly," said Dolly, with a flash of her eyes.

Victor gave a short laugh of derision. "What about yourself, Miss Smith, Motherly Mazie? What about that nice, perfect little novelette you gave me of how, when your father, the music-teacher, died, you were flung upon a cruel world to earn your bread—and, incidentally, oysters, mushrooms, *et al.*? I say! You can't get in one at me there. Why, you even did the emotional business when you spoke of your cruel lot in a way to make Réjane die of envy could she have seen you."

Dolly treated this tirade with scornful silence.

"What's your name?" she demanded.

"You've probably heard it, though nobody buys me by the gross anywhere." He took a card from a pig-skin case and handed it to her very gravely. "Victor Annable, my dear Lady Dolly. Father is a bank president, and he even owns a big steam yacht. This is very unfortunate. I'm very sorry."

"It's odd we both kept our first names," murmured Dolly.

"I'm glad of that," said Victor; "that is, if this dismal situation admits of gladness at all. It would have been awkward if I had now to think of you as—say, Maria, and I don't

suppose you could ever get used to me as—Sam?"

Dolly's heart felt empty, except that a little of the old boredom was filtering into it. Victor, as by some fairy change, had become transformed before her eyes. His manner was different, his expression was not that of the buoyant young artist, laughing at possible starvation. In fact, her ideal had evolved into just such a young man as she might have met in London under the old conditions. Change the outward look of the place, dress Victor and herself fashionably, and there was now nothing to make their conversation different from what might have passed current between them in the secluded corner of a Bond-street tea-room.

"Why did you do this? Were you afraid, too, of being married for your money?" she asked, with a little imperious manner he had never seen before.

"No," said Victor, lounging back and unconsciously speaking with a drawl that, except for his American accent, was reminiscent to her of Piccadilly; "you were following adventure in the abstract, I in the concrete. You'll be surprised to learn that I did it because of you."

"But you didn't know me."

"Still—because of you. Will the story bore you?"

"Of course not," she snapped, while her heart sorrowed for that other Victor who had lectured her for buying his dinner.

"Well, it was this way. I was bored. All the family had gone, bag and baggage, to Europe. You know the big red-and-white house on the Square, with the daisies in the windows? That's my home. I saw you pass one day. I paint portraits. You first attracted me as a possible model. To put your wonderful, pale coloring on canvas and the something that is elfin and maddening in your face, was my first instinct. I saw you again. The interest deepened. I began to watch for you and the interest became gradually human, personal. I did not

intrude; you did not see me. I began to follow you. I saw you come in here half-a-dozen times before a daring idea came to me, that made me feel like a social Columbus—to become a worker like you, share the same sort of life, get to know you."

Dolly began to feel a little happier. Matters were improving, since she unknowingly had been the instigation to his adventure. She moved her chair a little nearer. Victor's face, too, lost its listlessness. He looked at her very tenderly.

"We were to be like the happy vagabonds in 'La Vie de Bohème,'" he went on; "I dreamed of Mürger's people as I arranged my plans and rented a room. That was seven months ago. We met, as you remember, in a controversy over the ownership of a bottle of milk, with Mrs. Schlitzner as umpire. It was sweet, adorable, refreshing. But I was different from you in one thing. You have not seen your world since you came here. I returned every day to mine. I used to have my breakfast at my club or at home almost every morning. The empty house and the butler asked no questions about the mysteriously shabby clothes I sometimes wore. Really, I seldom slept here."

"You didn't even live the life sincerely while at it," she said, the glow lifting from her heart again and leaving her cold. He was just a fashionable young man as he stood up before her, nodding dismally.

"Don't think you're the only one disappointed. Look at me," he said, vigorously; "this smashes to smithereens one of my pet theories. I always meant to marry a poor girl. Rich men ought to, I think. I believed that somewhere a lovely young worker was being prepared for me by Fate. In you, I thought I saw my ideal little toiler." He laughed, grimly. "In you—in Lady Dolly Lanesborough! Why, you're even a bigger fraud than I am. You haven't a pinch of artistic vagabondism to your

back. You're not only rich, but titled. You see my position? Here I am, bound to a rich and titled wife—I, who always wanted to play the Lord of Burleigh to a poor girl—with better results."

The Lanesborough pride flowed over Dolly's face as she sprang up and faced him.

"Fortunately, Mr. Annable, the master has not gone very far. Let us forget to-day. You can still marry your—toiler." The word ended in a hard sob. She went to the divan and plumped her head into the pillows.

Victor stood dazed, then, much to his own surprise, found himself on his knees, kissing Lady Dolly Lanesborough's left ear passionately.

"Look at me, Dolly. I won't give you up. Why—good heavens, I love you."

Something inarticulate came from the pillows.

"You love me, don't you?" asked Victor.

He thought the head nodded, "Yes."

"Then what fools we are," he murmured into the little ear. "As you said, dear, it's the same Cupid, though he's become both aristocratic and wealthy—and I'm the same, and you're the same—"

She turned her tear-wet face at this, and murmured like a sobbing child:

"That's what we must remember. We're the same—and the *love* was no pretense." She sat up and wiped her eyes. "I've thought of a lovely thing," she murmured; "let us always, always, pay the rent of your little room and mine for two real strugglers, Victor. Let us know that the people we played at being are really living, and perhaps loving—here. Shall we?"

"You're a brick to think of it," he said, with his arms around her; "but I want never to see this room after you've left it. I'll tell you why—the Muse has whispered something to me, Dolly:

"Lacking Dolly's face,  
It would be  
Night eternally."

## A SPECIAL DISPENSATION

By Virginia Woodward Cloud

HE slipped out of bed, but not altogether out of a dream, and trotted to the banisters—a sturdy, square-shouldered little figure, in a white night-dress and blue slippers and with yellow hair curling warmly against her neck. She sometimes awakened, and sent a whispered, "Good night," down to her father, and caught in return his murmured, "Go to bed, you rascal!"

But no one, except Jimmy the butler, knew of this reprehensible habit, or that it had occasionally reached the extreme limit of the library. Marie would have nipped it in the bud. But Marie's room was separated from hers by a closed door, and Marie slept as only the just, or a portly Swiss *bonne*, can sleep. Of course, her mother knew nothing of these nocturnal orgies. If she had, she would doubtless have said, "How absurd!" and would then have given it no more thought than she gave to the acknowledged idiosyncrasies of her husband and only offspring, or to the hundred and one of which they were guilty and she ignorant.

It was extraordinary how so perfect a type of modernity could have become the mother of a chubby, happy-hearted child such as Nancy—"A jolly little chap," her father called her, then perhaps forgot her for a time. But there were unexpected moments of escape, when she slipped away down to the library to curl in his great chair, or upon his knee, and when her direct, contented gaze recalled to him his mother, and a house set in green orchards, and a yellow-haired, bare-footed boy, who, as a

matter of fact, drove the cows to water every morning and night of his irresponsible life.

But Nancy's father and mother had grand-stand seats in the amphitheatre of modern life, where memory was crowded too far back for recognition. Meanwhile, Nancy enjoyed life immensely. Had she received more attention in detail from her pale, beautiful young mother, whose one spare hour a day was enforcedly given to the *masseur*, she might have developed, even at a few years, into a precocious and conventionalized product. But fate threw the child upon the mercies of a system of which Marie was the body and Miss Witting the head; consequently Marie, unknown to nerves, and of kindly intention, saw well to the physical needs of her charge, while Miss Witting's method was opposed to the ultra-development of the infantile intellect. Therefore, Nancy grew and flourished, through some secret of inheritance, into a self-reliant and wholesome mite. The day when she would miss her mother was not yet come, because, unless abnormally imaginative, we are not prone to miss that which we have not possessed. She adored her father, whom, through the illogical reasoning of babyhood, she called "Totty," and her richest moments were the glimpses at forbidden hours, or when Totty put his head in the nursery door on his way to a dinner, and paused for a suppressed romp, when she threatened to rumple his hair, which was as yellow as her own.

But Jimmy was her sepulchre of secrets, for, from the night of her

birth, Jimmy and the child had affiliated. It was then that the old man waited in silence until the young master had thrown off his coat and stood before the fire looking flushed of face and over-bright of eyes, as one who had been intent for too long a time upon a fascinating pastime. The old man stood at the door to say:

"It's a girl, sir."

"Nonsense, Jimmy," said his master, tolerantly; "it's cards, that's all. I played high and lost—as usual."

"It's a girl, sir, up-stairs," repeated Jimmy, "so Miss Millicette says."

"Who the deuce is Miss Millicette?"

"The trained nurse, sir."

"Oh, by Jove!" the master was still in surprise. "You mean—why, what the devil do I want with a girl, Jimmy?"

"I don't know, sir," said Jimmy, with grim truth.

"A girl—! How is Mrs. Wallace?" he added, perfunctorily.

"Doing well, sir."

"A girl!"—the master's brows contracted. He knew now that at some time he had known a vision of a boy—a big, college-bred, football-haired boy, manly and one to be proud of—but a girl!

"Yes, sir. I took the liberty of going up, Mr. Hal. You know I saw you when you were born. Miss Nancy sent for me, sir. I don't know much of young ones' looks, sir, but the nurse does say that she never saw a baby strike out so strong from the shoulder as this one, and at six hours old, and it did seem to me to have a look of Miss Nancy—of your mother, sir."

The young master turned suddenly and struck a match.

"Bring me a brandy-and-soda, Jimmy," he said.

It was a quiet house for a child, except when her mother entertained, and she had fairylike glimpses through a crack of the nursery door. Her father and mother were objects of supreme value and doubly so being

mainly unattainable. But with this idealization was no conscious need of affection. Her mother was an object of beauty and elegance, and the only creature in whose presence she felt a thrill of awe, not strong enough to make her daily visit other than enjoyable, however. This visit usually took the same order. She followed Marie in the morning, and bent to kiss her mother's smooth cheek in its nest of white laces, and heard Marie answer the usual questions pertaining to health. Or else her mother sat before the mirror in the boudoir, while the maid brushed out her long hair; then the child carried away the image of the clear, patrician face reflected in the glass with its unvarying expression of cold indifference. Only once did this change, and she never understood the reason; it lingered in memory, however, perhaps to be developed some day under the ray of maturity. It was all about her finger-nails, which, it appeared, were not so immaculate as usual, and Marie received a sudden outpouring of rebuke which an acute listener would have deemed too strong for the cause that incited it. There were muttered words about inheritances, and Marie beat a hasty retreat to the ambush of the nursery, from which they did not appear until summoned. But this incident went to show that there is often lightning back of the most expressionless sky.

On the quietest afternoons, when Marie had the respite of a nap in a chair, the child sought Jimmy, and it was Jimmy who first awakened imagination, by telling her stories that were more entertaining than any of the Kindergarten Gems, or Young Ideas for Young Minds in Miss Witting's répertoire. She luxuriated in these afternoons with Jimmy, because he perched her upon a shelf that was under glass doors and cupboards full of unpronounceable delights, and allowed her to sit there while he polished silver and cut-glass. Back in Jimmy's museum of memories there were a river and a mill-race

where an unmanageable boy went wading and fell into a deep hole, and Jimmy slung himself out on a branch, and dropped after the boy, and was dragged down by the clutch of drowning arms, but managed to swim to shore where he lay unconscious from exhaustion.

"But I got him!" Jimmy would add, thrillingly. "I got him for Miss Nancy. But it took longer to bring me around."

This boy figured in all Jimmy's stories, and his mother took care of Jimmy after the drowning incident, and she bore the adored name of Miss Nancy—the same as Nancy's own. At the moment of climax, Jimmy would stop polishing, and the child would prompt,

"And Miss Nancy said you saved his life for her—"

"And at her dying bed I promised her to stand by him," Jimmy would interpolate.

"And never to leave him or let him be bad, but to take tare of him tause he didn't have no muvver!" she would add, triumphantly.

But for some weeks the frequent séance with Jimmy had ceased. The old man had grown strangely morose and uncommunicative. His lips were compressed in silence, and he went about his duties with the pallor of age accentuated by what looked to be that of late vigils. When Nancy stole down and climbed upon her perch in the pantry, Jimmy would only mutter to himself, bending over his precious charge of silver heirlooms which nightly he locked in a large safe. There were pieces of Miss Nancy's silver there that outmeasured in Jimmy's estimation the whole of the chrysanthemum-patterned dinner service. These treasures were always polished first, and put in the safe with a jewel-case that contained flashing stones.

But little Nancy was conscious that Jimmy did not prove so entertaining as of yore. He forgot often to tell her stories, and Totty, too, was quite unavailable. She had not seen him

for many nights, and then he did not play with her.

But on this particular occasion, when, after the manner of criminals, Nancy took advantage of the absence of guardians of the law, and stole out of bed, the blessed, incalculable sleep of childhood had deceived her. She little knew that it was long past the time when Totty had come home, or that Jimmy, the watch-dog, had slept for several hours the sleep of exhaustion. Her own sleepy eyes discerned a thread of light between the library portières, and she went down to it, and pushed aside the heavy curtains. But the light came from the dining-room beyond, where she supposed Totty was. So she curled in his big chair before the embers of a grate fire to wait and surprise him—she loved games with Totty. But fur rugs and warmth are conducive to dreaminess, and the dreaminess became a part of muffled sounds—the subdued grating of a file, the quick touch of silver against silver, the swift movements of some one bent upon a strenuous intention. These were woven into drowsiness, and she never knew that the sound which aroused her was the fall of a metallic object upon the mahogany table, then an exclamation, an oath, and Jimmy's old voice:

"Master Hal!—O God, Master Hal! Not you—not the silver, sir!"

Totty's strange, suppressed tones were ordering Jimmy to silence with a torrent of unintelligible words which only conveyed that Jimmy was being scolded, and she must wait Totty's time. Meanwhile, Totty was saying, passionately:

"I must, I tell you!—I am ruined—the cursed luck! It must be the silver and diamonds or a pistol, and only to-night to decide—she need never know. She'll think it common burglary—you know I'll not appeal to her—I wouldn't touch her money when she scorns me!"

And Totty laughed while Jimmy groaned.

"Master Hal!—! Oh, my boy! I've

a little in bank, and the land Miss Nancy gave me—take it—but not this—oh, not this, sir!"

Jimmy was sobbing incoherently, and the sound drove sleep from Nancy's eyes. She wriggled down and made her way across to the dividing curtains, and drew them from one of the strangest scenes a child's eyes ever looked upon. An open safe, a bag upon the floor and pieces of silver beside it, a young man in evening dress, flushed, haggard and burning-eyed, holding a jewel-case from which darted back the rays of Jimmy's candle upon the table, where also lay a pistol, and, wonder of wonders, Jimmy was on his knees, the tears streaming from his old eyes, and he was apparently telling her father a story.

" . . . Miss Nancy's boy, and I promised her, sir—and she said—she said—" Sobs choked off the words.

"She said, tause you saved his life you was to take tare of him, and not let him be bad, tause he didn't have no muvver!" piped a clear voice from the door. The men sprang apart as from a shock, Jimmy to his shaking old legs, the young master reeling backward as though from an unseen blow. With a gay laugh, Nancy flew to him, holding her night-gown from her feet.

"I been waitin' to tiss you, Totty! but you was scoldin' Jimmy."

Totty sank to a chair, as her arms clasped him, and she climbed to his breast, nestling warmly against him. His head dropped, and great breaths shook him, and he trembled from head to foot. Jimmy got to his unsteady feet and wiped his brow. There was a great stillness except for the child; the stillness of life's invisible battle-field, when the angel and the demon are wrestling, and one lies suddenly overthrown.

"Say I left it open, sir, or—or that it was me," muttered Jimmy.

"Jimmy's been bad, hasn't he, Totty? Jimmy fordot to lock the silver up! Jimmy was tellin' you the

stories about Miss Nancy, wasn't he, Totty?" the child crooned, laughing sleepily at Jimmy through her lashes, with the past-mastery of baby coquetry. Her arm was around Totty's neck now, her head on his breast, and somehow her thumb stole in her mouth—a shocking habit which Miss Witting had taken strenuous measures to break. Totty's breast shook strangely under her cheek, as her lashes drooped, and Totty's arms were straining her to him, as a man grasps at one hope of salvation. There were strange, muttered words above her head, of which she was unconscious. Jimmy got to his knees, hurriedly refilling the rifled inside of the safe. The jewel-case lay on the floor, and, as the old man picked it up, he said:

"It might have been done while we were asleep, sir—and—and you found it open. It was all my fault, sir—"

"Hush!" uttered the other, with rough hoarseness; "you'll kill me, Jimmy! Oh, I would to heaven you could! I've been mad! It must be paid to-morrow! It takes desperation to sink a man so low—but I would not appeal to her, she is so infernally proud. If she only cared—"

Jimmy suddenly closed the safe door, and its lock clicked upon its contents. The old man's gray head against the light seemed framed in a halo, only Nancy's half-closed eyes did not see it, and, as he looked down upon his master, the humility of his words was surely blazoned somewhere in immortal light.

"No one could have suspected, sir—it would have been me did it."

The master groaned, and something plashed upon Nancy's hair, and then another. Jimmy's hand was on his shoulder now. "Sir," said the shaking old voice, "sir, tell Miss Marian. It isn't right to live so far apart—Tell her, sir; I mean about your trouble. She may think you—you don't care, sir. She's young, and I think she'll stand by you—and, sir, there's the child."

There was a sound at the door as of movement after stillness.

She stood holding the curtain back, a tall, bright-haired figure, pale of face, startled of eyes and in white négligée. As she looked at them for an instant, her husband's haggard face dropped until it touched the child's hair, and he did not lift it.

"I heard sounds—I went to Nancy's room, and she was not there. What is she doing here?"

Perhaps a soul's recesses answered, "God knows," but outwardly there was silence.

Her eyes questioned her husband's white face as she came slowly across to his side.

"I—I heard what Jimmy said—that there is something you ought to tell me. What is it?"

He suddenly raised his eyes to hers, and their speech was a knowledge of suffering and appeal which mocked mere words. A veil was torn from the soul of the man, and it was seeking in passionate desperation for the heart of the woman. The barrier of pride-

bound unreality seemed to fall before it.

"What is it?" she whispered.

"Ruin!" he said.

She drew a deep breath.

"I've played madly—lost wickedly.

Oh, I cared for nothing! I knew you did not care! But it is over now. You shall not be troubled. I'm going away—I mean to-morrow I'll be—" Suddenly his eyes fell to the sleeping child, and a tremor shook him.

"Money! only money!" she breathed, then her clear, high-bred voice sank to a note of passion. "Money—and you knew I had plenty! And you never told me—you were going away! You—you thought I did not care, and I thought you did not. I have thought—O, Hal! Hal!"

The words broke from her, as she sank to her knees beside him, her arms thrown over him. Suddenly their lips met above the child.

Jimmy sat in the pantry with his old face bowed upon his hands.



### A CONSOLING THOUGHT

**S**HE—It makes me sad to think I had to refuse you.

**H**E—Oh, look on the bright side. You may live to regret it.



### A CHANGED WOMAN

**P**HILLIPS—So you knew her before she became my wife?

**G**ILMORE—Yes, very well; and she was a brilliant conversationalist.

"So she was, so she was; but she doesn't do anything but talk now."



**S**UNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER—Who made you?

**B**RIGHTEOUS BOY—Papa's corner in corn.

## SPRYNGE

**N**OWE dothe ye lyttle busy bee  
 Improve eche shynynge houre,  
 And hustle verrie activelee  
 Inne suckynge of ye flowre.

Nowe dothe ye toade beginne toe hoppe  
 Innsyde ye gardenne fence,  
 And Lyttle Wyllie spinnes ye toppe  
 Which cost him thyrtie cents.

Ye husbandmanne goes forthe toe hoe  
 And plant hys onyun settes,  
 While onne ye horse thatte wyll notte goe  
 Ye tinne-horne gambler bettes.

Ye merrie mayden saunters forthe,  
 All onne ye vernal morne,  
 Toe see what stylish togges arre worthe,  
 Her person toe adorne.

Nowe dothe ye blithesome fishermanne  
 Hye forthe to digge ye worme,  
 And puts ye same innsyde ye canne,  
 And laughs toe see himme squirme.

Ye roses soone wyll blossome redde,  
 And lovers, twoe by twoe,  
 Wyll wander where sweet dreames arre fedde,  
 And kiss and bill and coo.

A song of love for balmy Sprynge,  
 Whose beauties never fade!  
 Itte is the verrie sweetest thyng  
 Thatte God hath ever made!

WILLIS LEONARD CLANAHAN.



## SO SHE THOUGHT

**P**AULINE—I married in haste.

**PENELOPE**—Well, that's better than not marrying at all, I suppose.

# THE MANTLE OF DE MAUPASSANT

By Willard French

**J**UST before his last voyage, Paul Belloni Du Chaillu sat in an editorial room, chatting with the writer on the sad fate of Sir Robert Jeffries. He said: "Before poor Jeffries went blind, I was only a bad second at globe-trotting."

Poor Jeffries! Everything went wrong with him at once. Family, fortune, eyesight disappeared, almost simultaneously. I had been telling Du Chaillu that, when I lived in London, Sir Robert, poor, blind, alone, dropped and forgotten—until he reminded the world by dying—was occupying one small room, in a lodging-house, just across an alley from my apartments.

My library window looked directly into his. His shade was rarely drawn of an evening, and a taper always burned beside him. He sat in an arm-chair, his head thrown back, smoking a long-stemmed pipe; while his fingers followed the lines of a moon book, or lay idly in his lap. Yet he seemed to me the personification of internal and scintillating peace—like radium, giving without impoverishing. Often, in some sorry mood, I fled to my window to watch him, and he spoke the "Peace, be still!" to the waves that tossed me.

One evening I went over to confess. The old man received me cordially, and to my remark that to so great a traveler seclusion must be irksome, he replied:

"In all my life I never traveled so much as during the last five years. Guy de Maupassant played with the secret, and got himself well ridiculed. But I tell you it is more than a theory: it is a science."

Finding me sympathetic and a good listener, he went on.

"Let a strange dog come in here, for example, and what does he do? Stare at the furniture and pictures? By no means. He sniffs at everything in reach, then lies down, satisfied. Now, if something should ever recall this room to him, I have an idea that it would come back as a series of smells. A life-size portrait of his master is nothing to him: his master's old coat is everything. Perfumes which ravish us do not tempt him; odors which distress us often possess some charm for him. We assume too much when we credit it to his degenerate taste.

"We use our noses simply for amusement. Only when something like a house on fire is forced on our attention, through them, do they become of practical value. He makes his nose the most important sense by which he gathers the vital brain-pictures of life. A little common sense and crude alchemy, applied to his method, add reaction, open closed doors, and give the blind a moment's sight.

"In the crowded lobby of a theatre, did you never catch a passing whiff which obliterated the bright reality, and brought back to you the girl you used to love? That's the principle. You have traveled? I thought so. India, China, Africa, you know them? Good. Let me show you something through your nose."

He took a metal case from a drawer, and opened it on a table beside me. It contained a collection of small, sealed cans.

"You must shut your eyes," he said; "and keep them shut. Therein I have

the better of you; for, open or shut, my eyes never annoy me by prodding reason to reject my nasal dreams."

Laying down a half-smoked cigarette, I rested my head on the back of the chair and closed my eyes.

"I'll open this can first," he said. "It is a combination of rice-dust, cardamom, crushed betel-leaf, dried curry-buds, a drop of attar, the section of a hubble-bubble tube, and lo! in a narrow street we are pushed and jostled toward a broad bazaar. The bamboo huts are close together. The thick, shred thatches touch one another and glow, reddish-brown, in the west-slanting sun. The houses are all open in front, but at night are closed with bamboo screens. Dark, solemn sphinx-men sit on the floors, smoking hookahs. They have white turbans and loose, white shirts, over tight, white trousers. They are barefooted, but beside each one is a pair of pointed slippers. Behind them, knots of women, pretty but for their black-dyed teeth, loosely wrapped in bright colors, are chatting, laughing, and chewing betel-leaf. In the street, the crowd curses, *ad libitum*, but never is the name of any god taken in a prayer for localized damnation. Only Christians do that. Children dodge, shouting, through the crowd, all naked, shining from oil of mustard and covered with flies. Sparsely clad venders are crying the fruits and wares in bamboo baskets on their heads—always something better than they have. That fellow with over-ripe grapes, cries, 'Figs! fine, fresh figs!' The *bhisti*, with his goatskin water-bag, calls, 'Here is wine and milk!' just as his fathers cried it in the days of Isaiah, and as his cousins cry in modern newspaper advertising.

"Noisy drivers cling to donkeys' tails and beat them. There's a canopied coach, on two wheels, drawn by blue bullocks. The occupant looks the lord of all creation, sitting with folded arms, under the canopy; but he's only a native cook, on his way to the bazaar. There's a wealthy merchant, walking, in gorgeous silk, with

a huge turban. The servants, in front and behind, are yelling his name and pretending to push back the crowd. It is good advertising. Fakirs in endless rags, and fakirs in nothing but scars and dirt and daubs of yellow paint, go grunting sacred watchwords, sublimely unconscious that there is any one else upon the street. Coolies, stalwart fellows, only turbaned and girdled, jerk out a quaint song, under heavy burdens, or laugh it under lighter ones. Palanquins are everywhere, many bearing pretty girls somewhere, and the current carries us into the bewildering bazaar.

"Booths blaze with bright colors. A Yemanda swaggers past. His silk and satin costume is embroidered with silver; a huge red turban, twisted gracefully over his head, tilted to one side, is held by a band of gold; an end of red falls rakishly over his shoulder. His servant, all in white, trots behind him, with a whip for the pariahs who come too near. He is Brahman, and caste must be preserved at all hazards.

"That stately giant, in a small, orange turban, his rose-silk robe embroidered in gold, is vakeel of the great rajah. He is Mussulman. Caste does not trouble him. His eyes are fixed on the pavement, but he sees everything. Therefore is he there. A monster tusker elephant swings silently through the fantastic throng. The mahoot, on his head, is wrapped in contemplation. He is not responsible. A leader runs in front, carrying the rajah's insignia. The golden howdah is empty, but the saddle-cloth bears the crest of the rajah. The people make way without bidding, and as the crest passes them they fall upon their knees. The elephant is out as convoy for the palanquin behind him. From end to end it is carved ivory, upholstered in silver cloth, cushioned in white cashmere. The vakeel lifts a finger; the elephant stops; the palanquin rests, and he enters; his mission is completed. He is borne away toward yonder motee—pearl of mosques, whose glistening marble domes and Saracenic arches enfold

each other, till the mosque is but one beautiful, complex dome.

"The sky grows red, and through the blue mists of earth it tints the air with sunset purple. Here and there a smoking torch already flares before some booth, especially under the shadow of the colossal white-and-red sandstone gate in the high wall which forms the opposite side of the bazaar. Beyond it, all this is forgotten, in one of earth's most masterful transformations. The marble arch is continued in a grand arcade of cypress-trees, bordering a broad marble path, as it drops, gently, into a marvelous valley, a valley of fountains—magnificent marble fountains, and flowers—wonderful! Flora in all her glory! and palms—a hundred kinds, and tamarinds and pomegranates. Across the valley, on rising ground, so that it seems to float trembling on the foliage, clear-cut against the blue above and the sun's fiery farewell below, is the matchless mausoleum of the Light of the Harem, Nuhr Mehal.

"The crimson fades quickly, and along the beryl horizon is the Tyrian cloud that nightly girdles slumbering India. Against it four Mussulmans appear, in the nest of one of the minarets. The muezzin! They raise their hands to their heads, and with the splashing of the fountains and the patter of the palm-leaves sounds the first muggreet: '*La-illa-ilulla-Muhamud, Rusol-il-ulla!*' The moon, already risen, flashes triumphantly out of the ashes of the dead day, and the mausoleum is resplendent in a glory impossible under the sun. Whiter than snow, the great heart dome, the golden globe above it, the smaller domes and minarets about it, outshine the stars. Hail, champion of marble art! Incomparable Taj Mehal, I kneel to thee!

"The next can sets its genie free from dust of sandalwood, soaked in ambergris, laudanum, tea-leaves, camphor, musk; and the faces turn yellow and the cornices turn up. The turbans are little caps, or straw basins, upside down. The hookahs are brass-bowled

pipes, holding a thimbleful. Only babies and porters approximate nakedness. The rest are clothed and clothed upon in shades and grades of blue. The low-roofed houses lean upon one another—some of brick, with tile roofs, but mostly of bamboo. They are divided into little districts, fire-districts, by high, brick walls, fire-walls, supposed to say to the fires—there is no end of fires—'Thus far and no farther!' and the fire is given free range in the district where it starts. Sometimes it climbs a wall, which is considered most ungrateful. The pagodas and mansions of the rich have their own fire-walls, about beautiful gardens. But they are usually in the suburbs.

"Queues behind, slant-eyes in front, people are gliding everywhere, on thick-soled, silent shoes. The women, the younger women, are pretty—rather pretty. Such little things, and their hair always so well kept! There are two being trundled along in a wheelbarrow. Wheelbarrows, as common carriers, are as plenty as palanquins. They are side-seated, like little Irish jaunting-cars, built for two, with the cart before the horse; and the horse is a grunting coolie. Out on the roads, when the wind is right, they put up a sail.

"The houses are all shops. The shops are all bright streamers, paper, silk, anything on which words can be written. Words are written on everything. Dear knows what they all mean! A sudden cry demoralizes everything. Pig-tails, little women and wheelbarrows scatter like a bunch of quail. A yellow-buttoned mandarin, the prefect, is coming, in a gorgeous palanquin. A runner is ahead, crying out, and cutting right and left with a whip.

"Twilight comes and the highway is deserted. Highways are never lighted, and he who goes on them must carry a lantern bearing his name—a Chinese lantern, of course. What else could they be? It's a mistake to suppose that Chinese lanterns were created simply for lawn decoration.

"Here is a can with cocoanut-oil and clove, camphor, orange-rind and what-not, exhaling the brightest of sunshine and the bluest of blue-black sea. The steamer creeps cautiously through a narrow gate in a coral reef, and across a bay—a perfect circle, fringed with cocoanut-palms. Some of them bend far over the water. Their bushy tops are brilliant with that peach of the Orient, the gorgeous King Cocoanut. The dancing waves that lap their trunks are flecked, each with a flash of foam. Thousands of flying-fish dart everywhere, splashing in the white-caps, to wet their wings. Beyond the palms, the mass of flowering, fruiting shrubs is impenetrable. The fort, which guards the entrance, is engulfed. Nature could not endure anything so angular. There's not a sign of humanity till, through an almost invisible gate, we enter a smaller lagoon, alive with shipping, thick with native boats, lying high out of the water, like shingles on edge, held by long-horned outriggers, flying under dark sails or gliding under oars.

"Half hidden in green, ahead, is the port of Galle; broad, shadowy highways, swept by the spicy breezes that blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle. No one hurries, crowds or curses. From the babies up, they are the gentlest things in flesh and blood. Cocoanut-oil has turned their skin to olive plush, and their hair to crowns of glory. When it rains, they protect their hair by carrying a broad, fan-palm leaf over their heads. Their costumes are as lacking as the law allows. Mendicants are conspicuous because of their absence. So are nabobs. There is too little anxiety in life to nourish either. Waters full of fish, forests full of fruit and game, air full of sunshine, temperature without a change. Dear heaven, what would you more? Nothing ever happens here, except at sunset. Then the signal gun is fired, the vessels in the harbor drop their sails, the outriggered shingles disappear, the golden mirror of the golden setting turns a sil-

ver sheen, and the opal of the Orient goes to sleep.

"The next compound is simpler. I must light a pinch, from my can, in the candle and— Ha! ha! Coughing already! That's an old trick of bricks from the bogs of Drogheda—and then a laugh; the undertone and overtone of their Song of Life. All between is a wail of woe, but agitators are the only ones who seem to know that there is anything at all between.

"Hear her laugh—that girl on the bench by the coach-office door. She has a bundle tied in a huge, bright handkerchief. She is going somewhere—perhaps to America. Her short, fat toes coddle the pavement. All of the women are barefooted—except on Sunday. What hair! what eyes! what cheeks! Most of the women have shawls over their heads; hers has fallen off. Only the men wear hats and shoes—such hats and shoes! Her red petticoat is brand-new. Red petticoats are all the rage. The skirts are looped over them, up to the waist, falling only behind, for self-preservation—except on Sunday.

"Across the street is a crumbled mansion, with a littered inner court and disintegrating outside stairs. Up and down from it are mud cabins, roosting any old way—with little, low-down weeds permeating a neglected garden, where they have demoralized all the authorized things with Latin names. Some of the cabins have fragments of whitewash clinging to the mud, and crooked chimneys, thrust through the straw thatches. The thatches are a beautiful green—moss and ferns; for it rains nine times a day—even Sunday. There's a hole at one end for a window. There's a larger hole in the middle, for a door; holes usually open, often from constitutional inability of the door to shut.

"Inside is a pile of peat-bricks, waiting, and another, working under a pot of potatoes; and tea; a spinning-wheel and people—generations of people, all laughing or singing. At the other end, happy luck, is a pony, or, by the grace

of God, a cow; by lesser grace, sheep, goat, hens; by dire necessity and all over everywhere, a grunting graft of embryo bacon—God bless the Irish canary that pays the rent!

"Ponies and donkeys are passing, with burdens amidships and drivers perched on their haunches; men under hats their fathers wore, carrying knotty sticks—bog-oak shillalahs; boys with patches made into trousers; pigs and chickens, sheep and dogs—measly dogs; all laughing. Most of them, pigs and people, stop to say good-bye to the girl on the bench.

"A priest is coming. '*Pax vobiscum.*' The men all touch their holey hats; the women make a quick, queer bob at the knees. He stops by the girl on the bench. Through the pathos of poverty, the romance of living scintillates. A warning clatter clears the way. The coach, an overgrown, four-wheeled jaunting-car, draws up. The priest laughs his blessing, the people laugh good-byes, the girl laughs as she clammers up with her bundle, the driver laughs as he cracks his whip, and in no time every trace of poverty disappears.

"The coach is rolling through throbbing green, by a beautiful lake, dotted with islands that glory in centuries of wondrous lore. At a glance, we see Kenmare, with its lordly castle, the Herbert mansion, where Queen Victoria was entertained, the ruins of Ross and sacred Muckross. The way is stone-walled, but the very wall is bright with moss and flowers—wild strawberries growing to the very top. Over it is a stretch of greenest green, then blue—the blue about Innisfail; then mountains, dappled, purple heather and uncontrollable forests; loftier peaks beyond them in tinted mists. Oh, Killarney! Killarney!

"Now, this is fir balsam, spruce-dust, a bit of moss-mold, a fragment of fungus, cedar and a grain of musk. How your knees quiver and shake as you drop in the underbrush! How your heart swishes in your ears! Your

hands are cold. Your finger trembles on the trigger. The click-clack of his hoofs is coming near. Thank heaven, you are to windward! You hear the thump of his antlers. Your eyes are ready to leave you, and go out to see for themselves. Suffocation seizes you. Will he never come in range? Can you wait? Will you dare? And yet you notice every chirp and buzz about you. You see the pinnacles of pine sweeping the blue. You feel each root and twig against your knees. One vital tension magnifies all life; and what on earth can equal the supreme moment, when your first bull-moose looms in view, swinging his great hulk through the wild woods of Maine!

"Now—phew! This is no odor of Eden. No! And appropriately it takes us 'way down, a thousand feet under the forests of Griqua and the waters of the Vaal. Long lines of tunnels radiate in every direction. They are filled with flickering stars—dancing tapers fixed on wires and thrust into the matted wool of naked Kaffirs, bronze, dripping, working like maniacs under white drivers. Hades would be cooler. Egypt was never so dark. Dark? The darkness is so thick that the tapers form only a little halo about themselves. The din is deafening—foremen cursing, Kaffirs grunting, sledges clanging, shovels clattering, drills buzzing, clay falling. Louder still is the twang of iron wheels on iron rails, hundreds of tilting trucks dashing down the galleries, each with a ton of 'blue,' to be shot up the main shaft, out into the rain and sunshine, to rot, for the great pulsators. Louder still—a boom that shakes the earth and a rush of wind out of one of the tunnels and into it again, extinguishing the tapers! Only a blast of dynamite; only a means to speed. The tapers are quickly relighted, and the glistening, sweltering, naked army is at work again, as though the fate of the universe hung on its efforts. Day-shifts and night-shifts keep the trucks thundering.

Brakes? They have none. The only requisite is speed! By an unfailing average, every truck load of 'blue' shot up the shaft means a carat and a half of diamond. The more dirt, the more diamond! Speed! The demoniac fever fills the air. Sweat, groan, die — anything but delay! Speed! is the watchword of the Kimberley diamond-mines.

"I must borrow a light from my candle again, for the next, and the din is drowned in a stillness as profound as the dark that stifled the tapers. It is the silence of the desert —the sublimest solitude of earth. The caravan has come to rest, for the first night hours, in a hollow among the dunes. In a chariot of fire, the sun plunges behind the belt of leaden clouds, which never rain, but hang forever on the desert horizon. Instantly, everything is gray. Even the century camels, some of them, are taken by surprise. They drop on their knees, then on their haunches and topple over, with the agonized wail forever gurgling in their twisting throats while they consign themselves to Mother Earth. The Arabs hurry through belated prayers, and before the '*Ulla do valeen*' is off their tongues, they are turning praying-mats to sleeping-rugs, and, lacking goat-hair tents, they cover their heads with effie and burnoose and follow the camels.

"Then comes the incomparable splendor of the death scene in the drama of a day, on the desert of Nubia. Silently, suddenly the air is per-

meated with deepening purple. The dingy coats of the camels are dyed. The desert-browned abas of the sleeping Arabs are robes of royal crimson. The sand-dunes are the heaving breasts of an ocean of blood; the sky a dome of garnet set with crimson stars. A camel lifts his head and opens his eternally wondering eyes—soft, seal-brown eyes in the fierce day-glare, they flash, in the after-glow, like carbuncles set in fury fire.

"Silently, swiftly, as it comes, it goes again, and white stars throb in utter black, till in the east a faint horizon line appears. The stars grow dim; a red disk is above the dunes; the moon leaps out of the desert, growing dazzling white as it throws off the sand, and the still dunes become a silver sea. Still? Still as if no ear were open; still as if the earth and all that therein is had died with the dying day; until, from far, comes a faint sound, like the distant patter of fine rain. It is sand, lying loose beneath the heels of a hurrying caravan. See it? Swiftly, silently, but for that soft zipping sound, a long line of desert ships is flying for water! Swinging, swaying, black against the glistening white, a trailing train of shimmering shadows, in the subtle land of silhouettes.

"These are my ministers, my friend, and, when gloom would engulf me, I throw about my shoulders the mantle of de Maupassant, and bid them bear me away on their bosom, o'er oceans, wild and wide."



## INCONTESTABLE

INSURANCE AGENT—What are the proofs of your husband's death, madam?

THE WIDOW—Well, he has been home for the last three nights.

# THE SPINSTER'S RUBÁIYÁT

By Katherine La Farge Norton

**W**AKE! For the hour of hope will soon take flight  
And on your form and features leave a blight;  
Since Time, who heals full many an open wound,  
More oft than not is very impolite.

## II

Before my relatives began to chide,  
Methought the voice of conscience said inside:  
"Why should you want a husband, when you have  
A cat who seldom will at home abide?"

## III

And, when the evening breeze comes in the door,  
The lamp smokes like a chimney, only more;  
And even yet the deacon of the church  
Is telling every one my parrot swore.

## IV

Behold, my aunt into my years inquires,  
Then swiftly with my parents she conspires,  
And in the family record changes dates—  
In that same book which says all men are liars.

## V

Come, fill the cup and let the kettle sing!  
What though upon my finger gleams no ring,  
Save that cheap turquoise that I bought myself?  
The coming years a gladsome change may bring.

## VI

Here, minion, fill the steaming cup that clears  
The skin I will not have exposed to jeers,  
And rub this wrinkle vigorously until  
The maddening crow's-foot wholly disappears.

## VII

And let me don some artificial bloom,  
Then turn the lamps down low, and make a gloom  
That spreads from library to hall and stair;  
Thus do I look my best—but ah, for whom?

## VIII

You know, my friends, with what a brave carouse  
I once gave a reception in my house.

And how, though many hundreds I have spent,  
I have not yet ensnared a hapless spouse.

## IX

Strange, is it not? that of the women who  
Before me passed the door of marriage through,  
Not one will tell me of the tricks she used,  
And help *me*, finally, to get there, too.



## FABLE OF THE ELIXIR OF HAPPINESS

A YOUTH there was, who, finding no joy in the life he led, set out in search of Happiness. He passed through many lands and strange adventures. With his sword he won renown, with his talents he gathered great wealth. And his graces brought him a beautiful maid. But he tired of all, and was sick of heart, for Happiness was not born of his pleasures. So he cursed his fate, and, gloomy of brow, pursued his way with dogged will, but sinking hope, till at length, one dusky eve, as he rode along, he saw two thieves who beat an aged Hermit with fatal intent.

The Youth, with drawn sword, rode sharp to the rescue, and he slew the two knaves, and the graybeard gave thanks in the name of the gods. Then the Hermit took the Youth to his cave, and fed him, and asked him his will. So the Youth told the tale of his fruitless search, and bemoaned his luckless fate. Whereat the Hermit arose, and brought forth a golden jar and gave it him, and thus he spake:

"Behold the Elixir of Happiness! Herein lie the blended essences of all joys, distilled from the virtues of mankind. Eternal beatitude is in the hands of him who possesses this jar. Gratefully I give it unto thee, the fruit of the labor of my life, the which thou hast preserved. Go, and may it profit thee well."

Then the Youth took reverently the Elixir of Happiness, and, with great joy, departed therewith. To his castle he hied him swiftly, fearful lest he be robbed on the road. And he caused great bolts and bars to be placed on his gates, and there, in solitude and seclusion, he opened the precious jar, and partook of the contents thereof.

So the days passed and the weeks, and regularly the Youth took his portion. Yet Happiness came not. Austere, and in gloom, he waited in vain, and then a great rage came upon him, and he cursed his credulity. He seized his great sword, and swore a great oath, and spurred his charger to the Hermit's cave. There he called aloud, and the Hermit came forth with a smile, and bowed. Then the Youth seized his beard, and spat in his face, and, frothing with rage, cried out:

"Thou dullard! Thou dolt! Thy wit is as short as thy beard is long. With mine own hands have I kept safe thy jar. Each morn did I eat thereof. Speak, thou vile monger of lies, where is my Happiness?"

Then the Hermit rose up in his wrath, and smote the jar with his staff, so that it fell in a thousand fragments, and the Youth shrank back in alarm.

"Fool!" shrieked the Hermit, "'twas others thou shouldst have fed, not thyself!"

ERWIN HAYDEN.

# A FICTITIOUS VENTURE

By Robert Adger Bowen

THE editor paced the Bokhara rug of his drawing-room-like sanctum with unusual perturbation of mind. It was not often that he had such a difficult tangle to unravel as the various reports of his readers had involved him in with regard to the manuscript that lay scattered over his desk—the only sign of businesslike untidiness in the commodious room. Indeed, the opinions were so widely divergent that they were worse than of no use to him. He paused in his movements, and took them up one by one. “Rubbish, refuse,” was the alliterative gist of that from his most influential adviser. “No trace of literary merit, but psychologically of great interest,” read part of another. “Possessing commercial possibilities of the highest kind—a story that the female portion of the public may be confidently expected to buy with avidity.” “Unconvincing, but meretriciously alluring. Of doubtful availability.” At the bottom of the lot lay a longer report: “Charming in every way. Irresistible in humor and pathos. To be strongly recommended from every point of view.”

The editor sighed and frowned. He could base no judgment of his own on such reports. To refuse the thing expeditiously or to examine it himself were the confronting alternatives. He shrank from both alike. As soon as he refused it, some one else would seize upon it, and boom it to success. And he hated the imaginative froth of the fiction-monger’s mind, and was, to tell the truth, not much of a judge of it. Why did people do doubtful things? he asked himself, irritably.

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His glance fell involuntarily upon the report lying uppermost in the shuffle into which he had cast them in his annoyance. “A story that the female portion of the public may be confidently expected to buy with avidity.” He grunted. And this recommendation came from a woman! He saw a way out of the difficulty, and, seating himself in his capacious chair, pushed the button of the electric bell. “Send me Miss Burson,” he said to the office-boy; “without her notebook.”

Stripped thus of her reason for being, the stenographer appeared. The great man was once again calmly judicious. He smiled, genially.

“A little diversion for you,” he said, taking up the loose pages of the manuscript. “I want you to read this story and tell me whether you like it or not. That is all.”

The young woman withdrew, her heart fluttering with sudden glimpses of vistas that led away from typewriters and the pothooks of business correspondence. How had the editor come to have faith in her literary and critical judgment? She had always had it herself. Did she not always appreciate the most popular novels! She now went back to her desk, holding her head a little more gracefully than usual. She smiled condescendingly at the girl who sat near her, and who looked up in the pauses of the staccato dictation of a sales-agent. Then she began ostentatiously to read the story.

The verdict that she rendered a few hours later quite decided the editor.

“It is cute, cunning, too dear for anything. I think, perhaps——”

The editor raised his hand, deprecatingly.

"That is all," he said, smiling with happy assurance. "I am glad you like it."

"It's lovely! Are you going to publish it?"

He glanced at her, sharply, frowned, then smiled again.

"Yes. You will not speak about it, Miss Burson. Thank you for your valuable assistance."

Many of the press comments on the published book agreed with the disparaging reports of the readers, but the public seemed to be inclined to agree with Miss Burson. The book sold, sold well, became one of the "books in demand," and the press notices also that had not already been written now agreed with Miss Burson.

That young lady felt herself in fine fettle. Being of a naturally observant frame of mind, and living in a small town in New Jersey, she began to watch for the commuters who might be reading this book which she could not but feel she had helped into life, and it was not long before she was able to pick out at a glance, not at the book being read, but at the style of person reading it, who was engrossed with "The Little Bubble that Burst." She soon learned to pay no attention to the male contingent of her fellow-passengers on ferryboat or train. It seemed that the bursting of this particular bubble had no interest for men; but all those of her own sex, with the exception of the professionally shop-worn kind returning home with many bundles, seemed to be given over to the spell of the book. During the sail on the river from the Pennsylvania station to the Twenty-third street ferry, and the other way at night, Miss Burson would pass the time in walking up and down before the long line of passengers, and scanning the backs of the books they were reading. She seemed to be unconscious of the interest she aroused in the minds of those who were reading nothing.

And still "The Little Bubble that Burst" kept afloat in that atmosphere

in which much better books and newer had already burst and been forgotten. It kept afloat so well, indeed, that the firm which had brought it forth congratulated itself on the keenness of its foresight, and reaped a snug harvest.

## II

THE ferryboat was pulling out of the slip. Miss Burson had just begun her customary rounds, when the sight of a young man reading the familiar little red book caused her to sit down abruptly in the vacant seat next to him. To make assurance doubly sure, she leaned slightly toward him and looked at the pages. There was no mistake.

Suddenly, the young man closed the book viciously.

"Damnable rot!" he muttered.

Miss Burson recoiled with a little exclamation. It was as though he had slapped and anathematized her.

"Pardon me," he said, raising his hat politely. "I was referring to this incredible book." He held it toward her.

"I have read it," she retorted, somewhat sharply. "Indeed, before it was a book."

The young man glanced at her closely, at her trim suit, and then at the authoress's name on the book.

"I didn't write it," she snapped, reading his thought.

He bowed again, and moved away, leaving Miss Burson to her reflections.

Why should she, too, not write a book! The thought sent the blood pulsing to her heart. Why had it never occurred to her to do this before! In the exhilaration of the idea, she felt the atmosphere of the cabin stifling, and, getting up, went out on deck. The icy breeze blowing in straight from the Atlantic seemed to be sweeping from her all the prosaic drudgery of the past years, and filling her instead with a new and intoxicating resolve. Before she went to sleep that night, she had developed her plot, and begun to live in that curious world of unreal

reality known as the imagination. For three months she lived in it, with a fixity of purpose upheld by the continued success of "The Little Bubble that Burst," and by her own faith, stimulated by the interest she took in the magazine and newspaper gossip about popular authors.

It was not until all was finished, and she had, under the pseudonym of Grace Darling, sent the story to the publishing house that employed her in another capacity, that she found her assurance tinged with the anxiety of uncertainty.

One day, the editor sent for her to come to his sanctum.

"I want you to help me again," he remarked. "Here is a manuscript upon which I have had two conflicting reports. I should like your views."

Miss Burson's hands trembled. She recognized her own story. The editor looked for a second at the title-page before he handed the manuscript over. He had heard of Grace Darling, but at the moment could not remember whether she was a popular actress or a trotting horse.

"Evidently a pen name," he said, handing it to the excited girl; "see what you think of it."

The next day, she returned it with a type-written slip stating that it had interested her greatly, and that she hoped it might be published. She recalled the deprecating gesture on the first occasion, and ventured no expression of criticism. Ten days later, Grace Darling had signed the contract for the publication of her story, "The Way of Success," and safely resisted the attempt of the publishers to get her to their office for a personal interview.

### III

THERE had for some years been a suitor for Miss Burson's hand and heart in the person of a young railroad official in her native town. If she had not encouraged him, she had at least not discouraged him. This had not been due so much to instinctive co-

quetry as to the fact that he was pleasing in appearance and manner, and, of a certainty, very devoted. He had always been held in retention, as it were, for possible contingencies. Now, however, Miss Burson decided suddenly, being called on once again for her decision.

"Believe me, Richard," she said, in the best manner of her own Gwendolyn, in "The Way of Success," "it is a genuine grief to me to cause you a moment's suffering, but what you ask cannot be."

"You have always given me hope before," he replied, with sincere distress.

"Do not reproach me. Perhaps I was wrong. The truth is," and here she hesitated with piquant modesty a moment, "my horizon has broadened lately. New duties have come to me, duties that preclude me from the equally high duties of wifehood, and—motherhood."

"I thought none was so high," Richard hazarded, after due meditation, not understanding the absent smile with which Miss Burson was committing the whole scene to memory.

"Art is as high as life," she murmured.

"Oh, if you are thinking of the stage!" he retorted, rising. Miss Burson, too, had risen, and held out her hand.

"I am not," she said. "We won't discuss it now, however."

On the whole, she had felt greatly relieved at this dignified termination of a suit which was no longer a desideratum.

She perhaps felt the less regret at this step inasmuch as her mind was fully occupied with the already swiftly changing conditions of her existence. It was at this moment that she resigned her position as stenographer, and, before the receipt of her final proof, engaged a room in a large family hotel on the lower West Side. Her life now proved almost ideal. In some way, scarcely explicable even by herself, it came to be bruited about

the corridors and drawing-rooms of the hotel that the packages arriving at the desk, marked for Grace Darling, contained proofs of a forthcoming novel. In a yet more subtle way, it was implied, and likewise denied over the afternoon teas of the other guests, that much of the success of that remarkable "flier," "The Little Bubble that Burst," was due to the critical insight and rare judgment of Miss Burson herself, who was even then, so further report said, engaged in still more literary work. As a result of all this, Miss Burson received an invitation from Mrs. Whippingham Jones, whose serial was running in *The Arbitrator*, to drink tea in the parlors of the hotel "and meet a few friends." This invitation, which Miss Burson was not at all aware was accorded her because of professional distaste, was accepted with a complaisance that went far to prick the sides of Mrs. Whippingham Jones's intent.

"She knows nobody," that lady said to her intimate friend, Miss Wilkes, whose only book had sold less than a thousand copies, "and I shall have every author of repute in New York, and take pains to introduce her, without endorsement. Her airs are insufferable."

"How sweet of you!" Miss Wilkes murmured, with a sincerity of feeling as great as the falsity of her statement.

The event, however, did not justify Mrs. Whippingham Jones's expectations. She had not rightly estimated the self-advertising instinct just then keyed to its greatest alertness in Miss Burson.

"The audacious creature used her ignorance of every one for her own advantage," declared her enraged hostess afterward. "She had not read the greatest successes of the day because of her absorption in the writing of her own forthcoming book!" And Mrs. Whippingham Jones hardened.

"Never mind," soothed Miss Wilkes, "pride goeth before destruction."

"And a haughty spirit before a fall," responded Mrs. Whippingham

Jones, absently, shaking her suspiciously blond head.

#### IV

Not long after this, the advance notices of the book began to appear, and now Miss Burson first realized the unsatisfactory nature of a *nom de plume*. Not only did she feel cheated of the glory rightly due her from the public, but she found herself grafting on to Grace Darling her own peculiar prerogatives of birth and experience. A letter from the publishers had come asking for her photograph, and a statement of her life. The photograph she had been compelled to refuse, she wrote, "on principle;" the facts of her life she gave with the sense of paying the debts of some one else.

Then came the happy days of waiting. It would be several weeks before the book would be out, and several months before she might expect to receive any pecuniary reward. She counted her savings, divided them by the week, and felt her heart sink at the balance left over. Moments of depression were few, however. Not even the return of a short story, intended as a "pot boiler," and sent to a prominent magazine, dashed her buoyant hope for more than a passing instant. Once she were known, the editors would be begging for her work, and that time drew near! At last the book appeared.

She never forgot the sensation that almost overcame her as her eye fell upon the first notice of her book in the daily press, a notice several inches in length. Dropping into a chair in the spacious lobby, she began to read it hungrily.

That a house of such well-established repute as is that of the publishers of this remarkable book should now and then be led after the will-o'-the-wisp of a new and possibly popular author is not to be wondered at in these days of "high-fliers" in literature, but that any house should be deluded into the publishing of such preposterous rubbish as that going to make up the contents of this volume is indeed a cause for public indignation and protest.

The groan that burst from Miss Burson's lips made the tall lady with iron-gray hair and large seal rings, who happened to be sitting near, look at her sharply. She collected herself enough to read on with eyes that grew dry in their sockets.

It is inconceivable what purpose the publishers had in view. It is equally inconceivable that they should have been advised to publish this book. Is it that here they thought could be made an example of the too-ready writer of the age? For let it be said, for those curious to see a phenomenon, that "The Way of Success" is worth damning. So much, indeed, cannot be held of all books.

This was not all, but the rest Miss Burson could not make out. She had a queer sensation of trying to see with her eyes, but she could not see. The next thing she really knew was that the lady with the iron-gray hair and seal rings was fanning her with the fatal paper, while several bell-boys stood around with glasses of water.

## V

"The Way of Success" was a failure; there could be no doubt of that. Not all the press notices, indeed, had been so merciless as the first one, but publishers and public alike let the book fall. This humiliation, however, was as nothing compared with the bitterness of the covert silence or intolerable sympathy of those about her to whom Miss Burson had vainly boasted. Life had suddenly become a keen torture. She would have fled ignominiously before the storm had not her room been secured for some time in advance.

Had Miss Burson been inclined to doubt the failure of her venture, which she never had been from that awful first hour of her baptism of fire, Mrs. Whippingham Jones was determined that she should not. They met one evening in the elevator, Mrs. Whippingham Jones gorgeous in a gown of crimson beneath her yellow hair.

"I have been reading your book.

What was it that suggested the title, Miss Burson?"

The other occupants of the car turned to look at the woman addressed.

"The floating of a bubble," she replied, meeting Mrs. Whippingham Jones's hard eyes.

That lady drew down the corners of her mouth intellectually, and stiffened.

"The title is good," she said, lingering over the words. "I infer, of course, that you named the story before it was written."

"Is that the way you build up your efforts?"

An elderly lady, with a pair of sharp gray eyes, got up from the cushioned seat, suddenly, and cleared a space in front of her. Mrs. Whippingham Jones added several cubits to her stature.

"The titles for my novels are always organic," she declared, with freezing hauteur. "It is so difficult otherwise to avoid inappropriate names."

Miss Burson bowed to hide the tears that came to her eyes. As the elevator stopped at the main floor, the old lady put out a hand and touched her. She had always liked the girl.

"Never mind her, child. Get out of this as quickly as you can. There is no jealousy meaner than literary jealousy."

"But I am not jealous," Miss Burson said, pitifully, feeling that she had been bruised black and blue. "And I'm sure she need not be of me."

"Of course you are not." The old lady was leading the way into the dining-room. "But there is a triumphant jealousy as well as a fearing one. It takes what they call an artist of some sort to give it expression. You are going to dine with me."

"You are very good," murmured her companion.

"Not particularly. You see I once studied for the stage, and, when they hissed me the first night, I fainted. I know something of your feelings."

"But you kept on?"

"No, I didn't. I went back. It is very often the best thing to do."

Miss Burson watched her order an

expensive dinner, and was inclined to agree.

"You are going back," affirmed the old lady over her oysters.

"I don't understand. Back where?"

"It doesn't matter *where*, but back of the microbes that started you to write a novel."

Miss Burson colored vividly, and her entertainer laughed. After a time, the latter said:

"You are far too pretty ever to be an authoress! Only women plain enough to be willing to stay at home six nights out of the seven ever succeed there. Did you ever hear of a beautiful authoress?"

"There was Sappho," Miss Burson suggested.

"Sappho! Drink your wine, child. Sappho had a nice little voice, and sang a few suggestions. I'm thinking of the women who turn out a novel of six hundred pages a year, heavy with moral problems and all uncharitableness. You hadn't got so far, but it would have come. We sing Brunhilds in these days, not Cherubinos."

But Miss Burson was not listening. She had turned very pale, and, follow-

ing the direction of her gaze, her hostess saw a young man and woman seated at a near table. They were patently bride and bridegroom. Suddenly the man's eye met Miss Burson's, and he flushed crimson. Then he bowed, awkwardly.

"I see," said the old lady, after a few moments' close scrutiny of the table. "You might have been in that gray dress. He has shown poor taste, my dear. What made him do it?"

Miss Burson's hands trembled as she put down her napkin, and her eyes fell before the sharp ones looking at her.

"It was the book," she replied, slowly, almost to herself. "But he might have waited to see whether I really meant it."

The old lady laughed. Then she said, sententiously: "I see that you have gone back. That is good. We sha'n't have any more books now, but you will make me a useful companion."

Miss Burson met her interrogative look. She did not reply in words, but as they rose from the table, she gathered up the elder woman's gloves and purse, and followed her down the long corridor.



### CERTAINLY AN INDUCEMENT

**W**IIFE—I will never, never speak to you again!

**H**USBAND—What are you trying to do—make up?



**M**R. GREENEYE—Is it necessary to let that fellow kiss you during those amateur theatricals?

**M**RS. GREENEYE—You'd think so if you saw his wife!



**S**HE (*saucily*)—Now, sir! You mustn't crush these violets.

**H**E—Hadn't you better take them off?

## IN THE HALL WITH GWYNETH

By Zona Gale

**D**RAW the thread through the moving loom,  
Lift the silk where the sun will fall;  
Weave and weave and weave, till all  
The green woof passes into bloom;

Weave till the flowery pattern dies,  
And petals fade in the falling dusk;  
Out of the garden blow attar and musk;  
Over the garden one cloud lies.

Leave the loom, O daughter of her  
Who bore three fairies, and then bore thee  
To drink up the souls of the other three,  
And learn what strange things were;

Leave the loom, and sit here instead,  
Long fair hand on the carven arm,  
Face like a lily risen warm  
From the blood of roses dead.

Little shadows come in to blur  
The pageant of pearls on thy robe's blue hem,  
And the white of the pearl leaps out from them  
Like moons of dusks that were.

The drone of the loom was like the drone  
Of old warm noons in the lonely Fall,  
When fields are deep with broom, and all  
The air with amber bees is sown.

O Silver Woman, what shall I say?  
Is it indeed that I love thee?—  
Or only the beauty that sings to me  
When I cross thy way?

Is it thou, Sweet, or the dream of thee?  
Is it thou whom I love, or the old, warm noons  
And the sealèd light of sunken moons  
That thy strange face weaves for me?

I have loved women in many lands,  
Languid women and women at looms;  
I have seen Love laid in the thousand tombs  
Love understands.

And here is the whole brave truth at last:  
 There is something dearer than these, to me!  
 Aye, the beauty that love gives radiantly  
 Is the prize that I hold fast.

Leave me, thou lily of gardens dim  
 That I do not know, thou very sweet  
 Of the world of dreams! O Little Feet,  
 Go over the utmost twilight rim

Of the world, and bear thou there with thee  
 Thy silver hands and thine odorous hair—  
 But the dream and wonder thou canst not bear,  
 For the high gods gave them me!

Now Gwyneth who wove hath left her loom,  
 With silken step for the turret stair,  
 And the dark is everywhere in the room,  
 And the casement suffers the listless air.

The casement suffers the listless air—  
 There was one who leaned there long ago—  
 And, oh, for the scarf that she used to wear,  
 And a name that I used to know!



### THE ONLY ONE LEFT

THE last child looked about him painfully, and winced, without knowing why, at the contemptuous glances of the grown-ups. His mother, shame-faced and absorbed, fed him furtively from a bottle, and blushed as she did so.

"Mother," said the child, curiously, "what is the matter? Are we different from the rest? What have we done to cause all this prying contempt?"

His mother sighed as she replied:

"My boy, it is no longer good form to have children. The idea of not having them, promulgated at first by a few queens of society, gradually spread to the masses, until it became firmly established. Now no self-respecting wife ever has any babies. You are the only one left. You are the last child."

"But, mother, whom am I to play with?"

"Playing went out long ago, with the advent of psychology and the higher education. It was discovered that children got a certain amount of pleasure out of playing, and this not being in accordance with the scheme of life as taught in the highest thought circles, it was stricken off the list."

"But, mother, is there no hope for me?"

"None whatever. By being born you have fatally compromised yourself and me. You are a freak, and I am ostracized. There is no help for us."

And the last child, overwhelmed by the seriousness of the situation, conscious of the humiliation of his position, turned sorrowfully to his mother, and said:

"Oh, mother, will you forgive me? I knew not what I did."

And the mother folded him in her arms.

"My dear child," she sobbed, "don't you see that I am to blame? In the race for supremacy I have been left behind. I am a relic of the past. Alas! to think that I should turn out to be only a mere mother!"

# AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN

By Margaret Temple

JOHN LEONARD stood looking at his wife, hot rebellion in his heart, incompetent anger running riot there and maddening him with its futile onslaught against the things which must be endured.

"Must" is a word that admits of few evasions, and man is seldom prepared to face it. He fights the inevitable with all the primitive instinct in him, feeling, intuitively, for a weak spot in the enemy's defense. But for Leonard there was no weak spot. One great, unassailable fact stared him in the face.

The woman was his wife! They were bound fast in a hideous union; each struggling, fighting, protesting against the foreign element in the other. They had sprung from the same environment—known the same hopes, joys and fears; but the man had that within him which forced him upward, even as the woman lay slothfully in the state to which nature had called her.

She had all the instincts of the middle class, and, perhaps, all the virtues, though Leonard no longer recognized them. Time had wrought changes, many and lasting, but this woman was as passively commonplace as on the day when he had taken her to himself. Phlegmatic, inactive and shiftless, as only a good, naturally lazy woman ever is, she had remained, perforce, as the great sculptor had hewn her out. The work had been roughly done—for even nature does not always father masterpieces—and rough it had remained.

Martha Leonard had been rather a pretty girl, and time had not robbed her of her comeliness. She was strong-

ly and straightly proportioned, with something of the Swedish cast of features; built for service, even as the Norman horse—whose shaggy feet and huge withers promise endurance—is built for it. There was no mistaking her parentage or occupation. To Leonard, positive ugliness would have been preferable to her vulgarly pretty face. He almost shuddered, when he thought of ever having seen anything attractive in it. He reminded himself that there was sometimes dignity in plainness, but that nothing could redeem the pretentious prettiness of a coarse woman. It was so flagrantly exhibited, so grotesquely adorned, so clumsily handled.

Leonard's life had been a good deal of a struggle, from the time when he had clung tenaciously to the skirts of the frail woman who mothered him until he had reached man's estate. His mother had worked out by the day—while her strength lasted—and his first memory was of being dragged from one house to another, thrust here, there and everywhere, to make room for his betters. He had had neither comfort, care, nor much food in those days; but he bore his lot with stoical indifference and cheerful equanimity. In fact, he was rather happy, and mourned only slightly when they told him his mother had "gone away." From that time on, he came in contact with the world—and its charity; and, because he had in him the stuff of which soldiers are made, he fought for his place on the great treadmill of life—and held it. At twenty-one, he enlisted in the United States Army—so fulfilling his vocation.

It was at this time that he married Martha Long, a sutler's daughter, and it was after this marriage that Leonard began to know himself. It was both a bitter and a beautiful awakening. Bitter, in the sense that, as he grew in self-knowledge, he also looked with soul-widening, analyzing eyes at the woman he had made his wife, and saw with horror the gulf that lay between them. Beautiful, in the sense that he had, as it were, come into his kingdom. In his miserable, starved life there had been no time for learning, and now that he could lay his reverent hands upon books, he well-nigh went mad with joy at what lay between their covers.

In that wonderful world, which holds life for every man, or woman, who can spell out words, Leonard came to live. He set to work to educate himself, with a grim determination that promised success. His mind and heart blossomed under the refining influence, as a wild flower that has been choked with foul weeds bursts into undreamed of beauty at the first breath of fresh air, at the first hint of a straggling sunbeam.

The man was innately a gentleman, and the polishing and beautifying of his outer nature was not so difficult a task.

He had been married three years when he offered the woman he had made his wife half his meager pay to live away from him. He was panting like a caged thing for freedom; and perhaps the woman, in her dull way, knew the same longing.

She could not understand Leonard, and she hated his superiority, and protested against the restrictions he placed upon her. Marriage had proved a failure, in every way, and she longed for her old topsy-turvy life, where she had nothing to do but stand behind a counter and issue sundries to admiring soldiers. Her father was somewhere in northern Oregon, and she was glad to go home. She went, neither feeling, nor leaving, a regret.

For six years, Leonard lived up to his part of the bargain religiously; and

then there came a time when the money he placed in the bank for her was untouched. He made inquiries, and learned that both the woman and her father had disappeared. Subsequently, he received unreliable information of her death in Alaska. Further search proved fruitless, and so Leonard, accepted the inevitable, and, as time passed, came to consider himself a free man.

Released from the cloying shackles of an uncongenial marriage, he worked to some purpose. He studied for a commission and won it, and, at thirty, was an officer in the United States Army—and the making or marring of his life lay in his own hands.

Few men, even of gentle birth, pass through the ranks of the army without being smirched with a taint of the barracks. Leonard, with his quick perception, recognized this intuitively, and he set to work to make a gentleman of himself. He spared no labor, but rigidly forged toward his goal.

At the end of the Spanish-American War he had won his captaincy, and the respect and admiration of every officer in his regiment. He had come face to face with happiness at last, and some of the goods the world can bestow. His past was a book, which he had laboriously closed. And no one cared to open it.

He had three good years behind him before Martha Leonard came into his life again. He was stationed just outside St. Louis when the summons came, and he went to her at once. He was with her now, penned up with his fate, in a dingy hotel room—face to face with the undoing of his life's work.

He had seen the hopelessness of protestation at once. She had a straightforward story to tell. She had lived honestly. She was his wife! Legally, morally, indissolubly, his wife! When she had returned with her father from Alaska, she had seen his name in the paper, learned that he was an officer in the army, and had come to claim her rights. She wanted to be a captain's wife! She wanted to be a lady! She wanted fine clothes and easy living.

She was tired of struggling. It was all so simple to her, but to him—

Seen through his world-widened eyes, she was more of a horror than ever—a vulgar, commonplace woman, little better than a servant.

He had reasoned until he was sick of his own voice; and now they stood looking into each other's eyes, defiantly. Husband and wife—each knowing their meed of hate.

At last he said again, doggedly:

"You must think out some other plan. What you ask is impossible."

"But I am your wife."

"I know—but it is impossible."

"Why impossible?"

"Because I shall not receive you."

"But you will have to."

"I think not."

"I tell you, you *will!*" Her voice rang out, shrilly. "Do you suppose I am a fool?"

"Hush!"

"Oh, I won't hush! Don't try your fine captain airs on me! Do you suppose I have forgotten you as you was when I married you—just a common trooper, no better, no worse. Take me out there and give me my rights. I guess I can act the lady with any of them. Give me a chance, I say!"

"I will not!"

He was ashy pale.

"But you shall!" She shrieked out the words, furiously, all the shrew in her coming to the front. "Don't think I am any man's easy game! I tell you, John Leonard, I know a bit about the army myself! I was raised and brought up at the doors—if it was the back doors. The colonel can make you give me my rights—or disgrace you! Take your choice! Ah! you're afraid of that, are you?—afraid of losing what you won't give me! I know you, if nobody else does. You are ashamed of me—that's what you are; though I'm no worse than when you married me, and you're no better."

"For heaven's sake, wait—and let me think."

"Oh, I'm tired of your thinking! That fine brain of yours won't help

you out this time. I want a plain answer, yes or no! or—shall I go to the colonel?"—insinuatingly.

"Listen to me, Martha." The man looked her in the eyes, commandingly. "Try to understand," he urged, slowly and impressively. "Be sensible. If I take you with me and acknowledge you as my wife, those people will not receive you. We will be cut adrift, living like strangers in a strange land, shunned, shamed, humiliated—I have worked like a slave"—he sighed, bitterly—"to fit myself for my position. It has taken years of labor to make me even what I am now; but you—you care nothing for such things! You would not even try to educate yourself."

"I reckon I have enough education to outwit you," she retorted, sharply.

"I have no doubt," bitterly, "but I can only appeal to your common sense. Tell me, do you want to live among people who will laugh at you to your face, and jeer at you behind your back?"

"I guess I can live with them as well as you can."

Leonard looked hopelessly at the stubborn face with its florid prettiness, at the tousled hair and impossible clothing, and—shuddered.

There was silence, a long, bitter silence, in which the tragedy was fought out between them. Then the man said, quietly:

"Give me three days to bring you my answer."

The woman considered a moment, then, glancing at his drawn, harassed face, acquiesced.

"Just three days," she reminded him, threateningly. "If I do not hear then, I go to the colonel."

"You will hear—do not be afraid," he answered, quietly. Then, without another look at her, he took his hat and walked to the door.

"Wait!"

He paused.

"What is it?"

"I have no money," she said, sullenly.

Without a word, he took out his

pocketbook, and, selecting a bill, laid it on the table.

"Oh, you're afraid of touching me, are you? I remember the time when—"

His eyes silenced her, and she broke off, petulantly. "That's all a woman ever gets for a life's devotion—"

"I beg you to remember," interrupted Leonard, coldly, "that you left me willingly, and lived apart from me for nine years. Half of that time you were as one dead, for all the news I had of you. Remember that, when you make your charges, please."

"Oh, I'll remember fast enough, when the time comes," she retorted, fiercely. "A wife generally has a pretty good memory. I haven't forgotten anything, and—I won't!"

Her face was almost ugly as she screamed the words after him, for Leonard had quietly left the room and closed the door behind him.

When he got into the streets, he found that it was already night-time. Thousands of lights were twinkling in the city—riotous lights, shooting from electric bulbs, sending out their intimation of gaiety and revelry within; softly-shaded lights, whispering of home and peace; dim lights, wistfully telling their tales of sorrow, suffering and sin, privation and crying want.

Leonard passed them all, walking heavily along without any fixed object. Mechanically, he turned toward Broadway and boarded a "through" car. The conductor had to touch him on the shoulder when they reached the garrison. "This is the end of the line," the man grumbled, looking at him curiously.

Leonard stepped down upon the little platform, and walked out into the cool night air. It was but a few hundred yards to his quarters, and he went straight there and changed his civilian clothes. A slight emotion showed itself in his face, as he buttoned on the familiar blue uniform.

It was half-past nine when he walked slowly down the line, and paused a moment outside a set of

quarters, where the light streaming from the windows fell in a broad band upon the road. The long, low windows were open, and a fitful Summer breeze played with the lace curtains.

Leonard stood quietly, watching the picture within. A girl in a white gown was seated at the piano, singing. Her voice, young and fresh, floated out on the evening air. The words of the old song sank into the man's heart, and remained there.

"How strangely are the ways of life adjusted;  
That where the roses bloom, sharp thorns  
abound;  
That where the heart has dearly, fondly,  
trusted,  
The hour of parting surely will come 'round.  
In thy fond glances, once I read a meaning—  
Oh! gentle heart, I trust my fate to thee;  
God bless thee, love! It was but idle  
dreaming;  
God bless thee, love! It was not thus to be!"

The man went slowly up the steps, through the vine-shaded porch, and rang the bell. The piano stopped, and the girl, taking her hands from the piano, turned quickly around. The hall door was open and she saw Leonard.

"I thought that was your ring," she called, gaily. "Come in."

The light from a huge lamp touched her figure as she came slowly forward, her white gown trailing lovingly around her. She was so dainty, so tender, so alluring! The kind of woman a man would commit any madness for—fashioned for love and for motherhood.

He laid his cap down in the hall, and went to meet her.

"I heard you singing outside," he said, taking the slender, cool hand in his. "I could have stood there listening forever."

She laughed.

"I can imagine you listening to anything for that length of time," she retorted, derisively. "But— Why, how ill you look!" Her eyes searched his face, quickly. "What is it? Tell me!"

"Come out on the porch," he said, abruptly, refusing to answer her. "It is stifling here."

She looked at him in silence for a

moment—at the haggard face and weary eyes; then, in silence, led the way out to the darkened veranda.

Little patches of light fell through the screen of vines upon the floor, and great wicker chairs yawned a welcoming invitation. It was all so peaceful, so full of beauty and refinement—and he was an alien, a mere upstart, whose pretensions to the niceties of life were ridiculous! He could imagine the disgust of the woman before him when she knew. He was afraid of her knowing—afraid to see the friendly light in her eyes fade; to lose that familiar, intimate tone in her voice reserved for him alone; to feel the shrinking in her whole form; the drawing away from him; the painful awakening to the knowledge that he was not of her kind. It required courage to face all this, and Leonard, sick at heart, was almost afraid of playing the coward. It was so much easier to go out of her life leaving an unsullied memory, than to lay the bare, unvarnished facts before her shrinking eyes.

The band was playing on the parade-ground, and the lights from the band-stand gleamed in small, sharp points, outlining it like a tiny castle against the sky.

Leonard turned his eyes to the girl. She was lying comfortably in the great chair, her round girlish arms falling indolently along its sides.

He made an impatient movement, and she turned her smiling eyes to his.

"Listen!" she said, softly, "do you remember that? It is the first waltz we ever danced."

"Don't," he interrupted, sharply. Then, as she turned surprised eyes to him, "I didn't mean to stop you," he stammered. "I can't explain, but—don't remind me of those things to-night."

"I knew you were ill," she said, contritely. "Tell me, won't you? Let me do something."

"There is nothing to do. Don't give me any sympathy. Wait—wait—"

She was silent, but all the pliant indolence had gone from her. She was alive, anxious, frightened, and then—

Slowly, pitifully, through the throbbing of the music, through the soft night air, into the heart of the woman he loved, the man poured his story. All, all, all! He forbore nothing, made no extenuation; only laid down the cold, bare facts, she listening, dumbly.

At last, he ceased speaking, and looked half-fearfully into her face. It was turned away from him. She was deathly pale, and only a little fluttering pulsation in her throat showed that she was breathing—and suffering.

Frightened at her stillness, he leaned forward and touched her hand.

"Muriel," he whispered.

But she did not give any intimation that she heard him.

"Speak to me—please!"

But she could not. She only clinched her small, ringless hands together and turned away.

Ah! he was suffering now. All the past emotion had been but a preparation. He was mad to defend himself, to put the unlovely truth in a lovely light, to help her—to help himself. All the fighting instinct in him was surging to the front.

"I know," he urged, bitterly, "that there is little I can say to aid either myself or you; but there is one thing—let me say it, please—one thing I want you to understand—that I would never have deceived you, even in the smallest way—it would have been impossible. I came from the ranks. You knew it. I presumed that you took my birth for granted. Indeed I am not ashamed of it. What I am you know—I hope, no matter what my birth, that I am a gentleman. I have tried to be one. This is a democratic country. I hold my position by right of my labor, and I am proud to have won it so."

He turned more to her, his face softening.

"I did not count—on—what—has come to pass," he said, slowly. "I tried to put love out of my life, and indeed I was so sure of myself that it was not until—quite lately that—that—ah, Muriel, let me say it! I am the same man whom, a few moments since, you called your friend. I could not

help loving you—what man could? You who know the power you wield so well, who have seen so many stronger men than I fall down before it, you will not judge me, for you knew long ago—before I did, perhaps—but I, manlike, blundered blindly along—until the knowledge came upon me like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. The time had passed for me to resist—I was utterly helpless."

He was silent for a moment, looking mournfully at her delicate profile cut out against the dark background.

"I had every reason to suppose that my wife was dead," he went on, arousing himself. "I had made repeated inquiries, which came to naught. There was nothing more to be learned, so I closed the incident. My past was my own—I still maintain it. But I knew that, sooner or later, I must tell you. I was waiting, hoping, when—this came!" He flung out his hands. "My life is cut short here," he finished, hopelessly. "There is no more to be said!"

She moved at last, and turned her white face to him.

"What are you going to do?" she asked, despairingly.

He started, and put out his hand as if to ward off the question, and then answered, stoically:

"I must go away!"

"What do you mean?"

"I will resign from the army."

"Oh, no! oh, no, no, no!"

"There is no other course open!"

She wrung her hands together in agony.

"Why—why not bring her here?"

"Death would be easier," he replied, quietly. And she knew that he meant it.

"Could—you—not obtain—a divorce?"

He smiled, bitterly.

"There is no ground."

She turned her head from side to side with childish helplessness.

"And there is nothing to be done?" she moaned.

"Nothing."

Her face was tragic; an overwhelming knowledge forced itself upon the

man. He crept nearer to her, and laid his hand on hers, reverently. What a small hand it was! a mere fluttering butterfly in his. He dragged it nearer to him, and tried to speak. He was a strong man and a good one, but curses rose to his heart in that moment, though his lips were turned to her and could speak only of love.

"Muriel," he whispered, softly, "my dear, dear one! I want to show you my soul, my heart, my every impulse. I go out of your life to-night, but I want you to know—to feel—in after times, that there was nothing withheld—that my love for you absorbed my whole life, and beautified it! You little knew how I seized every chance word that fell from your lips and treasured it. If you spoke of a picture, a book, a flower, it was a religion to me to know, and love it, too. All your tender ideals I absorbed, and strove to graft on to my own coarser nature. My prayer was to be a man that you could admire—I had no other thought—and, as a mason builds a mighty structure, so I built up my character from the thoughts in your heart—that tender heart."

The tears had come to his eyes, though he would not let them fall; but he bowed his head to the hand he held in his, and the woman looked silently down on him.

She loved him! God had not been kind in bringing so much misery—with so much love. She wondered, wearily, why she had been selected to suffer. She had not even learned how—life had been all playtime to her. She was one of those women from whom no one expects strength, yet who are stronger than the strongest, when tested. Tears of self-pity dimmed her eyes, but she would not murmur. She thought of him; she longed to comfort him—to put out her hand softly, and lay it on his dark hair. But she was ashamed of the caress; she had not learned to show her heart to any man.

The man raised himself, and his face was blurred and distorted, and not good to look upon.

"I must go," he said, rising unsteadily to his feet.

"Where will you go?"

She asked the question in a chill whisper.

"Where? Oh, out West—to California, Alaska, the Klondike—anywhere!"

"But how will you live?"

"I can earn a living."

He stood straight and tall before her—a man, wherever he went, and a strong one. His graceful head was held well up as he faced her.

"I must go," he repeated again. "It is the end—dear! I can't stay—and have you—remember me decently."

She was trembling now, and rebelling in her heart against the decree.

He locked her hands in his two strong ones, and looked in her eyes.

"I love you!" he said, in his pain. "Forgive me for it—I love you. Oh, I wonder if you know what love is, you frail, sweet woman! Look at me a moment. I am going—There, there—Oh, child! forgive me!"

He dropped her hands and walked blindly toward the steps.

She thought she screamed aloud; but, in reality, she made no sound—only held out her helpless arms. And he, obeying that voiceless call, turned—her face was transfigured with the eternal sacrifice of womanhood and a love that it was desecration to look upon. The man uttered a smothered groan; and she crept toward him, stumbling over her long, trailing gown.

"I can't help it," she cried, despairingly. "I can't—let—you go—Take me! take me!"

And the man, reaching then the extremity of pain, and shame, and bitterness, took the pitiful white form in his arms.

It was near dawn. The girl had got together the few small treasures she would not forsake, and was lying dressed upon her pretty, white bed, looking into the future. She knew what she faced. Delicate as a flower, and as frail, she was yet strong enough

to uproot her life and plant it again in alien soil—to stumble along into a strange country, with only love for a beacon. She did not grudge her gift, though it was too rich to put a value upon. The thought of her lover's face as he had held her in his arms was enough. She would make his heaven, though she passed through purgatory to do it. She scarcely realized the full force of what she was going to do—love held her in too strong a grip. The world and its usages seemed futile and of little moment, beside this wonderful kingdom into which she had entered. She was too much of a child to look at things with a woman's insight, and too much of a woman to feel with a child's heart. She was indeed in dire straits.

She looked wistfully around her little blue-and-white room, with its dainty trifles, its frivolous nothings. At the dance-cards, the cotillion-favors, the pictures, flowers, frou-frous—

Some one knocked at the door and handed her a note. She started up, surprised. The sunlight was streaming into the room, filtering joyfully through the filmy curtains. Another day had begun. She took the note listlessly.

"Is there an answer?"

"No, ma'am. A soldier brought it early this morning."

Muriel studied the envelope a moment, curiously, and then tore it open with reckless haste. It was from Leonard!

"Do not suffer too much," he said. "My beloved! I have taken the only way! I could not sacrifice you. God has let me have the strength to—give you up. Oh, you sweet, sweet woman! I, who have touched you, held you, loved you—*let you go!* I had not the courage, dear! Pity me!—and thank me! I had rather die than lift a hand to drag you down! It is for the best. Let me go. I know, Muriel, that this is not the end. I am too near the eternal to doubt God's mercy. I love you! Can you hear me say that through the silence? Forgive me.

Remember only that I held your honor dearer than my life, and let you go out of my arms as white as you came into them."

She finished reading and was staring dumbly at the white bit of paper in her shaking hands, when the door was pushed open and her sister came slowly forward into the room.

"Muriel!" she cried, "Muriel!" and stopped. "You know?" she whispered, blankly.

"What?"

"That—that—oh, Muriel, I am afraid of you!"

"Tell me!"

"I cannot—oh, I cannot!"

"Tell me—please!"

"Captain Leonard—shot himself—at—three this morning!"

"Is he dead?"

Her voice rose and rang through the room like the wail of some lost soul.

"He died instantly, and—oh, Muriel, don't look that way—*don't!* He wasn't worth it. He deceived us all. He—"

"Yes—?"

"He was a married man, dear, and—his wife is coming to take his body home!"



### A WANDERER'S LITANY

WHEN my life has enough of love, and my spirit enough of mirth,  
 When the ocean no longer beckons me, when the roadway calls no more,  
*Oh, on the anvil of Thy wrath, remake me, God, that day!*

When the lash of the wave bewilders, and I shrink from the sting of the rain,  
 When I hate the gloom of Thy steel-gray wastes, and slink to the lamp-lit shore,  
*Oh, purge me in Thy primal fires, and fling me on my way!*

When I house me close in a twilit inn, when I brood by a dying fire,  
 When I kennel and cringe with fat content, where a pillow and loaf are sure,  
*Oh, on the anvil of Thy wrath, remake me, God, that day!*

When I quail at the snow on the uplands, when I crawl from the glare of the sun,  
 When the trails that are lone invite me not, and the half-way lamps allure,  
*Oh, purge me in Thy primal fires, and fling me on my way!*

When the wine has all ebbed from an April, when the Autumn of life forgets  
 The call and the lure of the widening West, the wind in the straining rope,  
*Oh, on the anvil of Thy wrath, remake me, God, that day!*

When I waken to hear adventurers strange throng valiantly forth by night,  
 To the sting of the salt-spume, dust of the plain, and width of the western slope,  
*Oh, purge me in Thy primal fires and fling me on my way!*—

When swarthy and careless and grim they throng out under my rose-grown sash,  
 And I—I bide me there by the coals, and I know not heat nor hope,  
*Then, on the anvil of Thy wrath, remake me, God, that day!*

ARTHUR STRINGER.

## NICOTINE AND CAMBRIC

By Jeffery Farnol

RUTH laughed; not one of those low, musical laughs most heroines indulge in, but a good, round peal, warranted to carry from where we stood to the farthest confines of the coppice beyond.

I felt annoyed, for, knowing girls as I do, I had been careful to work the affair upon the accepted lines, from the light mood of laughing railly to seriousness, from seriousness to earnestness, and had almost reached the point where I should have clasped her hand with a "strong yet gentle pressure," when she brought me up short with the laugh as aforesaid.

As I saw the mischief brimming in her eyes—blue eyes they are, by the way—I felt rather glad on the whole that I had not reached the hand-clasping stage; as it was, the situation was decidedly trying. However, I assumed an easy, unembarrassed attitude upon the gate, and flatter myself I did not show it.

"The situation seems rather to amuse you," I said, quite sarcastically for me, after a somewhat lengthy pause.

"I am so sorry I interrupted you," she answered, twisting a lace handkerchief of ridiculous proportions; "do go on, please."

I felt for my pipe, and knocking out the ashes upon the gate-post, shook my head. "Under the circumstances I don't think I will, although it seems to have caused you no end of enjoyment," I said, bitterly; "but, then, I suppose you are used to such—incidents."

"As for me," I continued, and here I grew impressive again—"as for me,

the whole affair has been fraught with much pain—with great pain, and—and—I give you my word it has. Good afternoon, Miss Brangwyn."

So saying, I raised my hat, and left her. She seemed rather surprised at my sudden departure, I thought, and for that matter so was I, but I had a feeling that my last speech, which should have been more than ordinarily affecting, had somehow or other "tailed off" ignominiously—hence my flight. That is the worst of me; I can usually carry everything before me, until I make a slip, and then I lose my head completely.

I walked away slowly, with a certain pensive droop of the head which I felt was eloquent of dead hopes and shattered aspirations. More than once, I had an almost overmastering desire to turn my head to see if she was watching, but checked the impulse—I am singularly strong-willed sometimes—and continued my melancholy way, until, having to climb a stile, I took advantage to glance furtively back. Ruth had disappeared. I sighed—heavily, I remember, and, sitting down, felt for my pipe—it was gone.

A feeling of loneliness and desolation took possession of me. I got down from the stile, and felt through my pockets—carelessly at first, then more slowly, and finally ended by turning out all their contents in a heap; but my search was vain. I remembered knocking my pipe out upon the gate-post—I must have left it behind in my hurry.

I had visions of it lying desolate in the wet grass beneath a night-black sky, abandoned, forgotten—but I

would return and find it again at all costs. Acting on this determination, I already had one leg across the stile when I caught the distant flutter of a skirt, and saw Ruth coming slowly down the path toward me. I paused, feeling totally incapable of facing her just then and running the gantlet of her mischievous eyes, with any chance of success.

The path was overshadowed by a tall hedge, just now pink with dog-roses, on the other side of which was a ploughed field. Without a moment's hesitation, I leaped the stile and began retracing my steps, safely screened from view behind this friendly hedge.

Presently, I paused to disengage my coat from a thorn, and, as I did so, heard a voice approach, singing.

Was it possible, I asked myself, as I peered cautiously through the brambles, that Ruth could be singing, actually singing, after what has passed so recently? It was possible. I felt pained and annoyed. I lay still, however, and it was well I did so, for she stopped almost directly opposite me, and reached up for a spray of roses, which—in a manner peculiar to the species—immediately swung up gently out of reach. I felt pleased, somehow.

“Bother!” exclaimed Ruth, and stood up on tip-toe. I was lying in a dry ditch, and Ruth was wearing a walking-skirt, so that I could see she was standing on tip-toe.

“You’ve got to come, you know,” Ruth said, addressing the refractory blossoms through clenched teeth; “you’ve got to come;” whereupon she jumped, the first time unsuccessfully, and the second, but at the third attempt I heard a little cry of triumph, and saw her stand a moment to smooth the petals of the captured blooms with light, caressing fingers ere she went singing upon her way once more.

“That girl,” I said to myself, as I sat in the ditch, rolling a cigarette, “that girl has the most wonderful ankles in the world,” and I lay back smoking dreamily, until, with a sudden pang, I remembered my lost pipe.

By the time I had reached the cop-

pice-gate, I was once more lost in a reverie.

“What was it,” I asked myself, as I sat swinging my legs thoughtfully, “what was it about me that she always found so inextinguishably funny?”

I turned myself over, mentally, as it were, and viewed myself with a cold, impartial eye, but for the life of me failed to see it. Becoming aware that my cigarette was out, I pitched it away, and, the action reminding me why I was there, I got down upon my hands and knees, and began a careful search among the long grass.

I had sought vainly for about fifteen minutes, when I saw something white beneath the gate, and, raking it out, I beheld Ruth’s handkerchief.

I spread it upon the palm of my hand and laughed. It was a ridiculous affair, as I have said, measuring about four inches square, surrounded by a deep fall of lace.

And yet there was something about it that forbade my laughter. A subtle fragrance, a faint, illusory sweetness, always associated with her, came to me, so that, glancing about me guiltily, I brushed it against my lips, and thrust it into my pocket.

I continued to seek my errant pipe with undiminished ardor and no success, until I at length uncovered a rabbit-burrow, and at once was seized with the idea that here, could I only get deep enough, was the end of my search, and the more I thought over it, the more likely it seemed.

Forthwith, I removed my coat, and, rolling up my sleeve, lay down, and thrust in my hand.

Deeper and deeper I went, and still with no success, and all the while I had tantalizing visions of my pipe lying within an inch of my fingers.

I was kicking furiously in my endeavors to gain that other inch when I was interrupted by a startled exclamation above me. Screwing round my head, I glanced up and beheld—Ruth. Somehow, I felt at a disadvantage.

“A-ah—you’ll excuse me,” I began.

“Oh, whatever is the matter?” she

broke in, and I fancied there was a note of real agitation in her voice. "Are you caught in a man-trap?"

"Thank you, no," I answered, making one last supreme effort for that "other inch;" "it isn't a man-trap."

"Why, then, what is it?" she cried, retreating precipitately, and eying me in unfeigned alarm.

"Merely looking for my pipe," I answered, giving up all hope of finding it, and endeavoring to withdraw my arm.

"Looking for your pipe?" she repeated, with a suspicious tremor in her voice.

"Yes," I answered; "I lost it down a rabbit-burrow, you know."

Of course, I may have looked rather a fool wriggling there, trying to free my arm, but I don't think so; anyhow she had no cause, and certainly no right, to go off into such a peal of laughter, especially that laugh of hers that always makes me feel so confoundedly "out of it."

"But how do you know it's there—down the rabbit-burrow?" she asked, as I resumed my coat, watching me with a laugh still in her eyes.

"Well, you see, I have examined every blade of grass hereabouts," I answered, rather stiffly for me; "and, for another thing, because I am morally certain that it is down there; a rabbit-burrow is just the kind of place a pipe of mine would choose to hide in."

"What do you intend to do about it?" she went on, more seriously.

"Borrow a spade, and dig him up!" I answered, promptly.

"But you can buy another," she demurred.

"Exactly! that's so like a woman," I said, smiling a superior smile. "I could buy another, of course, but you see a pipe doesn't happen to be a soulless thing like a—bonnet, for instance, that one can cherish for a day and forget the next."

"Besides," I continued, more pointedly, "it is a very prominent trait in my character that I am faithful—faithful even to such an undemonstrative thing as a pipe. How much more so then—?"

"Oh, I forgot," she broke in—"my handkerchief! I lost it this afternoon."

"Anything like this?" I inquired, maliciously, pulling out my own.

"Oh, no," she laughed; "quite different; besides it had lace at the edges and an 'R' embroidered in one corner."

"Lace," I repeated; "oh, then, of course—" and I crammed mine back into my pocket.

"And rather valuable," put in Ruth, beginning to search among the brambles.

I seated myself upon the gate and, rolling a cigarette, watched her. Her hair had become loosened, and hung low upon her cheeks—dark, glossy hair, somewhere between brown and black—and, as the smoke floated up from my cigarette, I busied myself trying to find the right word to describe it.

"I think you are horrid!" she said, turning upon me suddenly, her cheeks flushed with stooping.

"'Misty' is the word," I exclaimed, with my eyes upon her hair.

"I said 'horrid,' and so you are, to sit there sneering while I grope about and scratch myself horribly among these—these beastly brambles," and she stamped her foot at them.

"Pardon me," I replied, "I can't sneer; that is the worst of me, I often want to, but I can't."

"Well, then, why don't you get down and help me?"

"Most happy, if you really wish it," I said, rising and throwing away my cigarette; "I was only waiting to be asked."

Forthwith I fell to work, peering under bushes while she held up the trailing branches, and all the while the humor of it—and I have a keen sense of humor—seethed and bubbled within me, so that it was as well she could not see my face.

"You say it was a small handkerchief?" I asked, pausing after the vain investigation of a blackberry-bush.

"Yes, rather small," she replied.

"With a monogram in one corner?"

"With a monogram in one corner," she repeated, quite pettishly.

"Then the chances are, it has blown clean away," I said. "After all, you know, a handkerchief is not much to lose; such trifles are not worth while worrying over."

Ruth looked at me with a whole world of indignation in her eyes.

"Only a little while ago," she said, "I found a man writhing himself into the most frightful contortions, with his arm down a rabbit-burrow, and all on account of a pipe, if you please, and a most obnoxious thing at that."

As she spoke, I could not refrain from thrusting my hand into my pocket, and as my fingers closed upon a certain dainty fragment of cambric and lace, I smiled, perhaps a trifle exultantly.

"Ah, but there is a certain indefinable something about a pipe, that is beyond even the best woman's comprehension. Try and think of it—lying out there somewhere in the black night, desolate, abandoned, and let it share your pity."

Ruth looked away from me across the meadow.

"And what of my handkerchief?"

"Small, I think you said it was?"

"Small, with an 'R' embroidered in one corner, and edged with lace," she said, ticking off each item upon her fingers with exaggerated deliberation.

"Valuable lace?" I asked.

"Old point," she sighed, pushing aside a stray bramble with her shoe;

"I did so treasure that handkerchief!"

"I'm very sorry, of course," I said, at the same time experiencing a strange exhilaration as my fingers wantoned with it in the secrecy of my pocket. "Yes, very sorry, but I'm afraid you must give it up."

Somehow, at this juncture, the situation struck me as so peculiarly humorous that I felt I was going to laugh, so I turned away and coughed instead, rather an odd-sounding cough, I thought, but it passed Ruth, who only sighed again.

"I suppose I must," she said, with a last lingering glance toward the black-

berry-bushes, "but I would have given anything to have found it."

At her words, a sudden idea occurred to me. If I could manage to find it who knew what might happen? Involuntarily, I drew my hand from my pocket. As I did so, Ruth uttered a little cry, and next moment had disentangled something that fluttered from the button of my sleeve—it was her handkerchief. I was horrified, and, for a moment, my presence of mind deserted me, then I tried to look surprised.

"By Jove!" I began, but the flash of her eyes rendered me speechless again.

"How dared you?" she cried, facing me in hot anger; "how dared you?"

I felt uneasy; a wild longing came upon me to clear the gate at one terrific bound, and vanish in the woods beyond.

"Oh, how could you?" she cried again. "To let me search and search and scratch myself, and—and—oh, it was cruel!"

I really thought she was going to cry. I took a step nearer, murmuring something about its being an accident.

There were tears in her eyes, and I felt for all the world like some cold-blooded murderer—my utter depravity appalled me.

"I'm awfully sorry, you know," I stammered, venturing a step nearer yet. But she retreated before me hastily, drawing her skirts tight about her.

"Sorry!" she repeated, and whole volumes could not have expressed all the scorn she contrived to put into the single word.

"Please don't cry," I began, "because—"

"Cry!" she repeated, in the same way, and, upon my soul, when I came to look again, her eyes were as tearless as my own. I felt utterly at a loss.

"Go!" she continued; "and never, never dare to speak to me again."

She was wearing one of those short, tailor-made coats that fit close to the figure—Zouave I think they are called,

but I won't be sure—and I watched her unbutton it and thrust the unlucky handkerchief out of sight, with a sense of utter desolation upon me.

Then, all at once, I saw something peeping at me from her bosom—something that, as I watched, slipped from its sweet resting-place, and fell at my feet. I stooped and picked up my errant pipe. I gasped with wonder, and

turned it over in my hand, scarcely believing my eyes.

"Ruth," I said, softly.

She did not answer, but a wave of rich color crept up from chin to brow, and, for a moment, I hesitated, wondering; but, seeing how her lashes drooped, and how sweetly her mouth quivered, my hesitation vanished—and I understood.



## OPIUM

I AM that one in whom worn hearts forget  
Their wasteful wage of sin-earned misery;  
Dear Circe of the sinful, I am she  
Whose face with others' tears is wet!

My voice is slow with murmur of the sea,  
My breast like green seduction of her graves—  
I bear the fevered heart, as on her waves,  
Until they drown beneath all memory.

I have no creed of life or loyalty,  
I have no joy of daring, or disdain  
Of perfidy; mine are the weary slain;  
The fallen, as to love, turn back to me.

In my betrayal certain madness lies,  
Of my desertion emperors have died;  
My soft embrace no bliss may safe deride,  
For I am she no man may dare despise.

My hair is stupor; languor-shaded deep  
My eyes, and dark with unsearched mystery;  
Men find Nirvana's prophecy in me,  
I am the timeless courtezan of Sleep!

MARTHA GILBERT DICKINSON BIANCHI.



MRS. STUNSON—Willie, do you know that there is a brand-new baby boy next door?

WILLIE—Why, mama, I thought the woman who lived there was a real lady!

## A SEASIDE CLIMAX

“I LOVE the sea,” remarked Jeannette.  
 “Then may I ask,” said I,  
 “Why, if you fancy things so wet,  
 Your bathing-suit is dry?”

She did not think my humor apt,  
 And gave me tit for tat:  
 “The ocean isn’t fresh,” she snapped—  
 “I like it, sir, for that.

“I like it, too,” continued she,  
 “Because it has some sand!”  
 (I suffer from timidity,  
 You doubtless understand.)

“I love it for its surf,” she mused,  
 “That bounds upon the shore.”  
 “Jeannette,” I cried, “I’ll be abused  
 In metaphor no more!

“Come, let the blooming ocean go!”  
 (I put my arm around her.)  
 “I’ll be your serf!” Said she, “Dear Joe,  
 You really are a bounder!”

FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



## FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW

HUSBAND (*reading*)—I see that old Dr. Saintly, who went off as a missionary, has been devoured by the cannibals.

WIFE—Too bad! He deserved a better fate.  
 “Yes; and the cannibals a better meal.”



## PRECOCITY

NODD—You don’t mean to say your child said all those bright things?  
 TODD—Yes, sir.  
 “Why, I didn’t know he could read yet.”

## OLD WADD'S LOVE-AFFAIR

By J. J. Bell

THE building at 196, St. George street was nigh a century old. It appeared mean and melancholy beside the palatial edifices which had recently become its neighbors, and which seemed to look down from their lofty height of ornate, red sandstone upon its dingy gray walls and plain, narrow windows with pitiless pride and superiority.

Time was when merchant princes had their counting-houses in Number 196; but now, if you were to watch the entry for a day—nay, a week—you would probably fail to detect, among those who passed in and out, a single individual whose bearing suggested even moderate prosperity in the paths of commerce. The offices within were occupied by strugglers, youthful and aged, eager and tired, hopeful and despairing, and a removal was more likely to betoken a failure than a success. Yet there were among the tenants a few who had spent the greater, if not the better, parts of their lives in the old place, making ends meet year by year by the simple expedient of tight-lacing the waist of existence till it could be girded by the inelastic belt of circumstance. Of such was Mr. Wadd, or William Borland Wadd, writer and notary public, as the blurred, painted letters on the left-hand wall of the entry designated him.

Were you calling upon Mr. Wadd for the first time, you would advance for some yards into the dusky entry, which smelt of more pipe-clay than it exhibited, and climb a flight of worn steps guarded by an iron rail which had once been green. On the first

landing you would be greeted with the sign:

William B. Wadd, Writer, Up-stairs.

Thus encouraged, you would ascend to the next floor, where you would find:

Wm. B. Wadd, Writer, Up-stairs.

Rising a story higher, you would read:

W. B. Wadd, Up-stairs.

And, finally, you would reach the top floor, and behold:

Mr. Wadd.

Following the direction of the finger, you would come to a door with a brass plate bearing his full designation, and a great deal of dirt and oxidation, and a hook from which a knocker had once hung. As you would be unable to open the door, you would pull the small brass bell-knob, the only thing in the vicinity with any pretensions to polish, and, before the tinkling had ceased, you would see the door slowly open—worked by a string from Mr. Wadd's sanctum—and hear a voice exclaim:

"Come straight in; straight in."

Accepting the invitation, you would pass through an unoccupied outer office containing a high, double desk, a couple of stools, and a stand bearing a copying-press—no other furniture; and you would enter the private room, the door of which was also manipulated with a string, to find yourself in the presence of William Borland Wadd,

writer and notary public, a little, clean-shaven man, gray and partly bald, with a long, beaky nose, and small, bright, spectacled eyes.

In a brief glance round the room, this is what you would behold: A pair of small-paned, dirty windows, and between them, on a dingy red wall, a map of the world as it was colored fifty years ago; to the right, a huge bookcase with several of its dusty panes cracked or broken and its sparse contents leaning at various angles, as if they had grown wearied—they were certainly heavy works—of standing at the perpendicular, and a mantelpiece decorated with empty ink bottles; to the left, a couple of mahogany chairs with threadbare horse-hair seats, a metal umbrella-stand, which would startle you by weakly collapsing did you seek to make use of it, and a couple of old engravings spotted and yellow on the margins; against the remaining wall, a table laden with folded and tape-bound documents and a number of deed-boxes.

In the centre of the uncarpeted floor, at one side of a massive consulting desk littered with papers, on a revolving chair which groaned when he moved, you would see Mr. Wadd, his slippers feet resting on a burst hassock, and his rheumatic fingers partly covered by brown mittens, holding the pen by means of which he terrified small debtors and sustained his own solitary existence. And then, of course, you and he would get to business, which is none of ours.

Mr. Wadd's most important clients were a number of large wholesale firms who had dealings with thousands of small retailers throughout the country, and who endeavored to keep down bad debts by pulling up all customers whose accounts were, without sufficient reason, overdue. He had also a connection with big stores that supplied private parties. Every month or so, Mr. Wadd, or "poor old Wadd," as the bookkeepers called him, received several bundles of accounts, few of them over five pounds, with instructions to recover the amounts due from

the respective debtors. He charged a shilling—plus a penny for postage—for each letter he wrote, and, further, obtained a small commission on the money returned. It was a poor enough income that he made, but he had no one dependent upon him, and, so far as any one knew or cared, he was never in actual want.

He was a wretched scribe—it has been related that a rural grocer once mistook a most threatening demand for immediate payment for a congratulatory note upon a recent addition to his family—but, as a rule, his communications were deciphered by the unfortunate persons to whom they were addressed, and in quite a number of cases payment was forthcoming. The letters usually began with an expression of surprise at the overdue state of the account, went on to threaten court proceedings, and concluded with the words, "Blame yourself for the expenses." Debtors who were able to pay nearly always remitted the money direct to the firms, but now and then a cheque or postal-order came to Mr. Wadd, and such an arrival was an event in his existence. Exchanging his slippers for his boots, his mittens for gloves, and donning a furry silk hat he would leave his office, not forgetting to affix to the door a card bearing the legend, "Back presently," and would hobble to the address of the firm, whose money he carried with exaggerated care in a special pocket inside his waistcoat. Inquiring for the head of the firm, who was usually willing to "humor old Wadd," he would be shown into the great man's private room.

"My dear sir," he would say, "I am happy to inform you that I have this day received from Thomas Slow—or another party—of Drumdenny—or another place—full payment of his account due to you—two pounds, seven shillings and fourpence—and have returned his account duly discharged."

The head of the firm, thus saved from bankruptcy, would simply congratulate and thank Mr. Wadd, who, after paying over the money and taking

a receipt for it, would return to his shabby office one of the proudest men in all the city, and, resuming his slippers and mittens, would proceed with redoubled zest to indite threatening requests, or still more threatening reminders, to the debtors on his list who required them. As a matter of fact, he enjoyed his work, and prosecuted it with an enthusiasm worthy of a happier cause. No lover longing to pour forth his heart, ever plunged pen in ink and put it to paper more eagerly than did Mr. Wadd when writing to some luckless tradesman who had had the temerity to ignore a previous epistle, and no treaty affecting the world's welfare could have been signed more proudly than his receipt for sums under five pounds sterling.

There was a dignity about the old man which, having regard to his humble circumstances, was really pathetic, although it struck most of those who came in contact with him as simply ridiculous; and he had a way of interrupting clients, who had called to consult him, by taking off his spectacles, wiping them with a large yellow handkerchief, and saying, "I well recollect a case in which I was successful," thereafter going into the most minute details of some trifling small-debt action, while the client vainly endeavored to get back to his own matter.

Between the hours of nine and six, Mr. Wadd rarely left his office except on business. At one o'clock precisely, he lunched at his desk on four small wine-biscuits and a glass of villainous sherry at a shilling a bottle. Still, it was sherry, and the name itself was respectable. Perhaps, as he sipped the rank stuff, he remembered the days of his apprenticeship, when his wealthy principals partook of biscuits and sherry in their private room, and talked of thousands and tens of thousands in the airiest fashion conceivable, for, though full forty years had passed since then, he had not lost the trick of nodding to an imaginary partner ere he put his lips to the glass. But Mr. Wadd had never had a partner. Once, long ago, when business looked brighter,

he had engaged a clerk, but the brightness had soon faded and the clerk had departed. So he was used to solitude by day, while his evenings were spent in an old-fashioned tavern, over tobacco and ale, in company with any habitué who was willing to listen, or pretend to listen, to his innumerable recollections of cases.

But it is time to quit the discussion of Mr. Wadd himself, and to come to the tale of how he once fell a victim to sentiment and yet retained his business principles; of how his heart beat softly while his hand wrote harshly; and of how, at sixty-six, he found the first debtor who had ever gained his sympathy.

It happened two years ago. The only other tenant on the top flat of 196, St. George street was a young artist, Paul Vannan, by name, who had occupied his studio for a quarter ere Mr. Wadd set eyes on him, during which period he provided a daily irritation to the writer's nerves. He seemed to be a merry-hearted fellow, for he mounted the stairs whistling loudly, and shut his door with a careless slam that caused Mr. Wadd to jump in his chair, and mutter: "The next time he does that I'll go out and give him a piece of my mind." But, somehow, Mr. Wadd never fulfilled his threat, and, indeed, after a few months, he grew to like the whistling, and ceased to start at the slamming of the door.

They met for the first time on the stair, one Spring forenoon about eleven o'clock. Mr. Wadd had just received payment of a debt of nearly three pounds, and was on his way to hand it over to his client, feeling as important as if he were the governor of the Bank of England. He heard the whistling below him, and presently the young man appeared.

For a moment, Mr. Wadd clean forgot his errand. He had often wondered what the artist was like, but now there was the last face that might have been pictured in his imagination. Years and years ago he had seen it in

the flesh--but then it had been the face of a woman, a woman who, he remembered, with something like a shock, had married an artist.

"A fine morning," said the young man, cheerfully, as he passed, wondering why the other had given him such a startled, wistful look.

"A fine morning," returned Mr. Wadd, recovering himself half-a-dozen steps lower.

Then he proceeded upon his business, but his client afterward remarked to his partner:

"Old Wadd wasn't so pleased with himself to-day as usual."

During the next week or two, Mr. Wadd fell into the habit of listening for the whistler coming up the stair. "Like a bird, like a bird!" he would murmur to himself, and, when the studio door slammed, he would smile and return to his work.

One May morning, they met on the stair a second time and exchanged greetings, and a few mornings later Mr. Wadd left his office when he heard the whistling, and descended to the street merely to gain a sight of the young man. He was so ashamed of himself that for some days he tried not to hear the whistling. But the attraction was too strong, and, again and again, he went down-stairs, trying to appear on business bent, as Paul Vannan came up, and, after waiting in the entry for a minute, ascended to his chambers in a stealthy fashion as if he feared detection.

The old man had fallen in love with the young. There is no other way of expressing it. Not for forty years had his heart warmed to a fellow-being as it warmed to the unconscious artist. He wondered if the other were successful, and took to halting beside picture dealers' windows and peering in as he walked to his lodging in the evenings in the hope of discovering a work by Paul Vannan.

And his search was at last rewarded, for, in a certain window, he found two small landscapes with tickets bearing the artist's name. He knew nothing about pictures; he had never desired

to see any work a second time; but now he became an art critic, and found fault with all paintings not by Paul Vannan. He spent an evening hunting around the walls of a large exhibition, and came away weary and disgusted because Paul Vannan was not represented. He inquired of his acquaintances at the tavern, and, when one and all asserted that they had never even heard of Paul Vannan, he quickly lost his temper, and railed at them for a parcel of fools. And yet, beyond a passing remark on the weather, he had not exchanged a word with the young man.

During the Summer, the studio was closed, the artist being at work in the country, and Mr. Wadd yearned to hear the whistling on the stairs. It was not till the middle of October that he heard it, and, when the welcome sound reached him, he hobbled forth in his slippers and mittens, a very excited and gladdened old gentleman. But, when Paul approached him, he was tongue-tied, and his thoughts became confusion.

"A fine morning," remarked the young man, pleasantly, as he stepped toward his studio.

"A fine morning," returned Mr. Wadd, with an effort, pretending he was going down-stairs.

The studio door slammed, and—and that was all! The old man went back to his den, feeling that he would never be any nearer to his beloved.

A month passed with occasional meetings on the stair, and then the whistling ceased. The artist still came regularly to his studio, but he arrived in silence and shut the door quietly. Mr. Wadd began to experience a sore dread. What ailed Paul? He always spoke to himself of the young man as Paul.

After a while, he could bear the suspense no longer. One morning, he stood with his ear to the inside of his office door until he heard footsteps. Whereupon he went out and descended the stairs. Vannan gave him greeting, but not in his familiar cheery voice, and, presently, Mr. Wadd re-

turned to his room with the knowledge, gained from a glance in passing, that his beloved was in trouble. Weeks went on, but the whistling and slamming were not resumed, and, by the New Year, the old man was in a fever of anxiety and misery.

His cup was filled when, on a January afternoon, the manager of the General Stores, Limited, called upon him to request him to take steps to recover the sum of fifteen pounds, twelve and sixpence, for goods supplied to Paul Vannan, Esq.

"Funny thing," observed the manager, "the party has his studio on this very floor. But I don't suppose he'll fall upon you and murder you. It's a bigger amount than usual, but we thought it would be all right. He paid regularly for nearly two years, but, after all, we can't depend on those artist fellows. Write him a stiff one, and, if he doesn't pay in three days, you had better take out a summons."

Mr. Wadd stared helplessly at the document in his hand.

"It—it doesn't seem so very much overdue," he stammered.

"Oh, the account's old enough. We've given him plenty of reminders, and the chances are that he's in deep water all round. We've been gentle with long-winded folk before, and paid for it. So give him one of your terrors, Mr. Wadd, and let me know the result. Afternoon!" and the manager hurried away, saying to himself: "Surely the old boy is failing. He never recalled a single case that he had been successful in."

Left to himself, Mr. Wadd laid the account on his desk, and groaned in despair.

"Poor fellow, poor fellow!" he sighed. "I might have refused the case, but that wouldn't have helped him. Some one else would have taken it in hand. What's to be done? What's to be done?"

For a moment, he thought of stepping across to the studio. But no! that was impossible. He could not face Paul in such circumstances. The young man was proud, so much might

be read in his face; and it would hurt him to be offered assistance by a complete stranger. Wherefore assistance must be given anonymously. But how?

Suddenly, a way occurred to Mr. Wadd—a beautiful way. He left his desk and opened a small safe concealed in the bookcase. Mr. Wadd had no bank account. It had never seemed worth while opening one.

Presently, he departed from his office, forgetting to affix the customary intimation to the door. Ten minutes later, he was staring aghast at a picture dealer's window. The pictures he had come to see were gone. Trembling, he entered the shop, and the dealer eyed the shabby old figure curiously. Stammering, Mr. Wadd asked a question.

"No," said the dealer, "they aren't sold. They are still here."

He did not offer to show the landscapes. Surely this was no buyer. But Mr. Wadd laughed softly, and inquired the price.

"Ten guineas apiece," said the dealer. "Vannan is a coming man."

He thought he was as likely to get ten guineas as five.

Mr. Wadd fumbled in his breast pocket and brought forth a handful of notes and gold.

"I have only nineteen pounds with me," he said, with a sigh. "Will you trust me for the balance till next week?"

Something touched the dealer.

"You wish the pictures? You like them? Well, I think Mr. Vannan might let you have the pair for nineteen pounds. I'll inquire of him."

"No, no! Give them to me now, and take the money, and let me pay the balance next week. Take down my name and address"—he gave it—"but pray do not mention them to the artist. Promise me that, sir, promise me that!"

Eventually, the old man got matters his own way, and returned to his office with a parcel under each arm. Having removed the coverings, he set the pictures upon the two chairs on his

right, and admired them for several minutes.

"Clever fellow! clever fellow!" he muttered. "Paul will soon get past his troubles and be a great man."

He sat down at his desk and took up the account against the artist. He began to chuckle.

"It's the best joke," he said to himself, "the best joke that ever was! Paul will never suspect. He'll never imagine when he passes me on the stair that I've a pair of his fine pictures in here. He'll think I've nothing here but a pen and ink and paper and a nasty way of putting them together. Well, well, it's a good joke! And Paul will soon be whistling again! Now I'll just write the boy one of my stiff ones, as they call 'em."

He chuckled once more as he laid a sheet of notepaper before him.

The letter was still unsigned when the bell rang. A boy entered with a note for the writer, and asked for an answer. The note was from the manager of the General Stores, Limited, and was to the effect that a cheque had just

been received from Mr. Vannan, so that Mr. Wadd need not go further in the matter. It concluded with the hope that Mr. Wadd had not posted his demand for payment. The old man drew a long breath.

"Say that it's all right, all right," he said to the messenger.

When the boy had gone, he sat still for nearly half an hour. Then he left his desk, and, having lit the gas, examined his purchases once more, and admired them.

"Paul will find the money useful, anyhow," he murmured, as he laid them carefully in a cupboard beneath the bookcase. He was later than usual in leaving his office that night.

Next morning, he sat at his desk listening, listening, listening. And at last his eyes brightened and his face grew radiant.

"He's whistling!" he said softly to himself.

The studio door slammed.

Mr. William Borland Wadd, writer and notary public, was quite happy.



## IF WE SHOULD WAKE

IF we should wake, the long, long slumber through,  
 The centuries had spread upon us two,  
 Before the sounding of the trump on high,  
 Softly to stir, and quietly to lie  
 And listen to the falling of the dew,  
 I think the single, perfect rose that blew  
 Over your head, would turn to greet my few  
 White violets, and, smiling, we should sigh,  
 If we should wake.

And I should whisper through the sod to you,  
 "Did you rest well, sweetheart?" and, through the blue,  
 God's choir would sound, as you made soft reply,  
 "I rested well, and it was sweet to die  
 And rest in hope of heaven coming true,  
 If we should wake!"

ETHEL M. KELLEY.

# THE GOLD BOOK

By Edgar Saltus

“**B**RADSTREET'S” is very depressing. It tells you how much money other people have. But, presumably, they need it. Eothen, after describing the burial of a pilgrim, remarked, genially, “I did not say, Alas!—nobody ever does, that I know of—but I thought that the old man had got rather well out of the scrape of being alive and poor.” The pilgrim died in Jerusalem; he died a long time ago, at a place and at a period when the tax on living was not rapacious. What Eothen would have said had the poor chap died in New York, for the life of us we cannot conjecture. To live in New York costs, said Mark Twain, “a little more than you've got.”

This view, while it does not make “Bradstreet's” any the less upsetting, rather consoles you, don't you know, when you come to think of other people's efforts to keep in the swim. Some of these efforts must be quite unholy. “Bradstreet's” is, therefore, not merely upsetting, but uplifting. It inspires such beautiful thoughts.

But “Bradstreet's,” though elevating, is not elegant. It lacks the pageantry which the “Almanach de Gotha” provides. It gives ratings, not romance. There are no pedigrees in it—none of the perfumes that once exhaled from the “Libro d'Oro”—the “Book of Gold”—in which the first families of Venice shone. These things “Bradstreet's” omits, and these are things which no local work supplies. A plea, then, for something of the kind. Blessed as we are with first families, we should be blessed also with

a gold book in which they, too, could shine.

Such a work would be nice to have about the house. It would be very serviceable in other ways. The *fine fleur* that glowed in the Venetian work is quite phantasmal now. In the “Almanach” trees are falling; there is a steady diminution of good old names abroad. At their increasing extinction European genealogists are reported to be disturbed. A book illustrative of local conditions would reassure them. It would show that American industry can make good any deficit in Europe. In this line we are accumulating quite a surplus. Then, too, consider the reports from other lands.

In China, for instance, is the family of Confucius, which, after an existence of over two thousand years, persists luxuriantly to-day. In India there are rajahs—we would give their names if we could spell them—whose ancestry extends back twice as far. In Spain there are the Osunas, whose ancestry extends yet further—to Geron who tended the flocks of the Sun. In Abyssinia is Menelik, with, behind him, the Queen of Sheba and Solomon. And in Wales there are the Mostyns, whose pedigree, seventy feet long, begins with Noah, proceeds royally through the Old Testament, on through the Plantagenets and thence down, or rather up, to them. These are old families.

You may say that that is all nonsense. But then, you see, we have also our *jeux d'esprit*. Local genealogists, to their own delight, perhaps,

and certainly to ours, have discovered among us a regiment of descendants from Alfred the Great and, with them, quite an army descending from other and yet greater sovereigns.

Beside Noah and Solomon, mere European kings are, perhaps, not much to boast of. But genealogy can do better by us than that. The original settler hereabouts was glacial man. There is no valid reason why our first families should not discover that they descend from him. To the outer world they are rumored to be sufficiently chilly to make such a pedigree credible. Then, with indicated escutcheons—icicles, for instance, on fields of brass—and assorted mottoes—such, for example, as *Pourquoi Pas?*—not omitting appropriate crests—triple tiaras might be fetching—they would have trees beside which European varieties would be but bushes. For that matter, where there are trees, here could be forests. Forests rather dim, perhaps, and, perhaps, too, rather green, yet highly ornamental, and so perfectly adapted to the cultivation of titles.

The glamour of these, the taint of endemic trade would not diminish. On the contrary, trade is becoming very fashionable. In England, you begin by being smart and end by going into trade. Here, you begin by going into trade and end by being stupid. It is quite the same process, as you may see, with only this difference, that in England you may get a barony for your trouble. Many have—so many that the Duke of Grafton, remarking to Thurlow on the subject, was reminded that in the House of Lords he could not look before him, behind him or on either side of him, without seeing peers that owed their seats to commerce.

Were these seats owed, instead, to the Conquest, they might be less comfortable. The gang that came over with William was a rum lot. Hume says that their birth was mean and their station low. Thierry calls them *canaille*. But time is a great costumer. In the perspectives of its corri-

dors you cannot tell plebs from patricians, and, even if you could, what difference would it make, provided, of course, that in the interim the tree or the forest has sprouted? There is the one point for local genealogists to consider.

For starter, what could be better than our glacial man? There is nothing *canaille* about him; moreover, he antedates the remotest rajah. It is true he is extinct, but then that is such an advantage! He cannot pop up and deny you. Besides, extinction is becoming so modish. The best names in Europe are—or were—the De Veres of England, the Fitzgeralds of Ireland and the Montmorencys of France. Of the three, the first and last are gone—They have faded in the subsidence which is disturbing genealogists.

Yet, for the comfort of the latter, it is worth noting that some really authentic families still survive. Scotland has a lot. So has Ireland. England has more. Of these, the Herbarts and Howards are typical. The Howards, though not of the most ancient origin imaginable, are of the best lineage, by reason of intermarriages with the bluest blood—with the De Veres, for instance, with the De Cliffs and with the Gowers, whose chief, the Duke of Sutherland, holds one of the oldest peerages extant. But the Earl of Mar runs him close. The present incumbent is the twenty-sixth of his name.

France also has some old families. Among these descent from a crusader constitutes the best *souche*. But in the male line there are precious few left; so few that genealogists can count but one—the d'Arbussons. Other good names, such as Rohan, Uzès, Montbazon, Noailles, La Tremoüille, de la Tour d'Auvergne, Grammont and La Rochefoucauld are august, perhaps, but not antique. By way of compensation there are in France four thousand persons that possess transmissible titles. The number is awful to contemplate. Yet what is it beside the full half-million which, at last accounts, Russia could show?

The nobility of Spain is plentiful,

also. There are grandes by the acre, but not *sangue azul* by the pail—not the blood, free from Moorish and Hebrew admixture, of which the hidalgo is made. Barring the Ossunas and royalty, there is not a house in the realm a bit ancienter than the cream of French cream. It is the same in Germany. In Italy alone you still get an echo of departed days.

In Italy are the Colonnas, the Massimi, the Orsini, the Strozzi, the Tutti Quanti—particularly the latter—all of whom go back to the fourth century, and some further yet. These are the oldest families in Europe. The Massimi descend—or claim to—from *Fabius Maximus*, and the Colonnas from *Colonus*, a cousin of *Nero*. There is not merely age, but imagination. Here, now, is a little art. In the Colonna gallery is a picture of the Resurrection in which scions of the house are represented as receiving exclusive attention Above. The modesty of that you might think rather hard to beat. But in the gallery of the ducal family of *Levis*—which, according to their account, descends from *Judah*—there is a picture representing one of the lot standing, hat in hand, before the Virgin, who says, “*Mon cousin, couvrez-vous.*”

These, of course, are but agreeable instances of legitimate family pride. We have nothing so spacious here, and even glacial man could hardly help us to it. But then ours is a new country. It lacks modesty, it lacks art and also the *Seize Quartiers* which, heraldically, are the real test of blood, or, more exactly, of birth—the sesame which discloses, not a problematic and tortuous descent from people that never existed or who must have been ashamed of themselves if they did, but a direct and authentic ascent to sixteen great-great-grandparents, all entitled to ensigns armorial, and, as such, gentlefolk, though not necessarily noble. For, don't you see, precisely as a man may be a gentleman without being noble, so may he be a nobleman without being in the least genteel.

On the contrary! And so obviously

that the old rule used to be that a patent of nobility, though it ennobled the beneficiary, did not convert his descendants into gentlefolk until the third generation was reached. That converting was the great thing. It conferred a quality so esteemed that the highest pledge a king could give was his word as a gentleman. Said the fourth Henry of France, “The title of gentleman is the fairest that I possess.”

Now, what did he mean by that? In this country, a colored felon, black as the ace of spades, has been overheard referring to a fellow-culprit, blacker, if possible, and more felonious than he, as “that other gentleman.” So are terms delightfully twisted; conceptions also; standards as well. But, then, never yet has an exact definition been provided. Those that we have are pertinent, but not precise. They lack the reagent from which a test can be made. That, though, is perhaps due to the fact that into the composition of the breed there enter certain elements that are not readily resolved.

Genealogically, a gentleman must, of course, be third in descent and, locally, he must have inherited a million. If he has inherited ten million, then his descent be hanged! Though his mother were a cook and his father a crook, he is it. Elsewhere, the severity of these requirements are tempered. In Germany and Austria, you need not have a penny, but you must have quarterings. Without the latter *Crœsus* himself could not get in. He would not be regarded as “born.” The *Faubourg*, also, is less severe than we are. The *Faubourg* does not object to money and has a *penchant* for race, but it particularly likes dullness. It is very gentlemanly there to be heavy on hand. London is more like New York. London admires trees, but prefers estates.

So much, then, for genealogy. As you see, the test is lacking. So it is with jurisprudence. Legally, a gentleman is one who has studied the laws of the realm and does no manual labor. That is concise, but not convincing. Theory is better. Theoretically, a

gentleman is one who displays courage and courtesy. Add simplicity to that and you come near getting a decent definition. The more simplicity you add, the nearer you come. The Czar of All the Russias may wear—and probably does—when he has to, the closed and imperial crown of state with as little arrogance as a plain woman wears an unbecoming hat. But affection of any kind, though often endearing and always amusing, is never well-bred. Here endeth the first lesson.

The second concerns the lady. A lady is the gentleman's perfect complement. Or rather, was. In sedater days, a lady was careful to do nothing important. That was the occupation of the *grande dame*. In society, as constituted to-day, there are women in plenty that are *grandes dames* and more yet that are damn grand. There is progress.

Mere males are less advanced. In addition to other characteristics, some of which are rather old-fashioned, they are likely to hold that getting one's name in the papers in connection with smart functions is no more a proof of gentility than a new way of being dull is evidence of original thought. Yet when a hostess does give out their names, they do not bear malice. As Cardinal Newman remarked, a gentleman is always too indolent for that.

Such, then, are the hallmarks of gentlefolk. In the disappearance of old families abroad, these things must there be diminishing. In the appearance of old families here, locally they must be increasing. The logic of that admitted, it follows that in the passing of European gentility is the chance for American push.

And high time, too! Society here

has rather lacked, don't you know, what you might call initiative. In modes and manners, society over the way has been its model. There is no harm in that. But, being a progressive people, it is only natural that we should wish now to see our own society begin to set the fashions, and, while it is at it, to rule the roost.

The idea, natural in itself, becomes practical when you realize that the women here are the best looking in the world, and the men the best off. Escutcheons, quarterings, family-trees, are all very well, but, throw them in or throw them out, and not for a second will they weigh in the balance with bank-accounts and beauty. There is an outfit that knocks spots out of any ancestry, however distinguished or extinguished. Add brains to it, and it beats any nobility, however famous or infamous. Brains, bank-accounts and beauty make a sum total, not genteel merely, but ideal: beauty, because it is the heart's desire; bank-accounts, because we have no other god than Mammon; and brains, because, when men have that, they survive even death, particularly "Bradstreet's" and even the "Almanach de Gotha."

There is the real thing! There is the aristocracy the nation awaits. If it waits long enough, it ought to get it, don't you think, and with it, of course, a proper almanach—an "Almanach du Got There," if you like—which, in supplying points as well as pedigrees, not only romance but ratings, facts and figures in addition to family-trees, will tell at a glance who's what and why, and provide the world in general—including society at large—with what both lack and always have lacked—a decent "Libro d'Oro," a practical Book of Gold.



### A CLEAN JOB

**FIRST DOCTOR**—How did you get along with your last appendicitis operation?

**SECOND DOCTOR**—I removed both the appendix and the man.

# THE STRUGGLE

By Emery Pottle

THE café was crowded. It was luncheon hour, and every table was taken. The squat, low-ceiled basement had a confused, not unattractive, look—an unformed mass of men, tables, white-aproned waiters, artificial palms, bizarre gilt and rococo work, all reflected a dozen times over in the plate-glass mirrors along the walls, and all wavering hazily through the blue-gray tobacco-smoke that blurred over the room.

Haideen paused irresolutely at the entrance and gazed at the scene. Ordinarily, he took a seat, the first that offered itself, and ate his food with that degree of indifference and speed which is acquired only by the city-bred American, impatient of any necessary exercise not conceived and worked out by his own brain.

To-day, however, Haideen felt a sudden distaste for the familiar place. He hated the idea of eating; the recurrent waves of high-pitched talk irritated him; the hot, stale smell of cooking was unendurable; and the sight of so many human beings consuming food struck him as brutally vulgar.

He was just turning away from it all when Garrett saw him and sent a waiter to fetch him to his table. Garrett and Lidell were lunching together. As Haideen walked indecisively over to them, he noticed that the heavy, bearded face of the former was flushed and that his red-veined hands shook. The two greeted him, effusively.

"Sit down, Haideen, you old piker," shouted Garrett. "Eat with us."

Haideen's thin lips curled slightly, but his voice kept to its usual calm indifference.

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"Thanks, no," he said. "I—I've lunched. I was just going."

"Well, have a drink, anyway," insisted Lidell.

"Yes, young fellow, you've got to have a drink. Here, waiter! Come here! Give this gentleman a drink, d'ye hear? What do you want?"

It was useless to protest. Haideen gave his order, and sat down at the table.

"Make that three," added Garrett, importantly.

"How's that plan working out in your head, Haideen? Going to beat me and Lidell here, too, eh? Got the finest library ever built, have you?"

Garrett leaned heavily on the table and leered at Haideen.

"Oh, I've got an idea stowed away in my head," Haideen answered, good-naturedly enough, inwardly cursing Garrett's coarseness.

"Well, 'twon't do. 'Tisn't good enough. We've got you young chaps, you sapling architects, pushed back to the tall timber," continued Garrett, laughing boisterously.

Haideen smiled.

"I dare say," he said, shortly. In his heart, he knew that Garrett was probably speaking the truth. "Garrett & Lidell" was an old established firm of architects and their plans commanded the highest consideration and price. "Oh, I dare say, Garrett, that you and Lidell will make butter balls out of us all," he added.

The waiter brought their order.

"Here's to the best man—the man who wins!" cried Garrett. Haideen drank hastily and started to rise.

Garrett laid his hand on his arm.

"You're all right, Haideen," he said, a little thickly, "but what you want is success!"

Lidell laughed appreciatively at the joke.

Garrett's fat, puffy hand tightened round his cocktail-glass till the thin goblet snapped and crumpled and the liquid trickled to the cloth in an unsightly red stain.

"There! See that! You want to be able to do that—and not care a damn. I can pay for it. Here, waiter, bring me another of these."

Haideen muttered something and went out quickly, his nerves on edge.

"Damned cad," he thought, as he returned to his office and climbed on the high stool before his drawing-board; "beast!"

## II

HAIDEEN sat moodily smoking a cigarette, making idle marks with his pencil. The front elevation plan of the new city library, on which he was at work, seemed to fix itself in thin black lines on his brain. It occurred to him that his conception was hopelessly commonplace; Haideen had that rare ability to criticize, with accurate impersonality, his own productions. His fingers closed on a penknife, and he was on the point of slitting the drawing from end to end. Then, with a sigh, he dropped the blade, and fell to work with a dull, dogged persistence.

After an hour of it, he pushed back his stool angrily and struck the table in helpless exasperation.

"It's no use. I can't get it. What the devil ails me?" he muttered, but his face relaxed into a grim smile.

"Guess I know the trouble, all right. I wouldn't have believed him six months ago, if some chap had told me it would take like this. Beats anything what a row a girl will make in a man's mind—can't work, can't think, can't sleep! Ugh! If I could only forget Hester for a month!"

Haideen pulled out his watch to note the time, but his glance, instead, caught the photograph stuck into the

case. His keen, defensive eyes smiled gently back at the girl's face smiling up at him; the haggard shadows of his dark, thin face softened amazingly, and he lost the hard lines about his mouth. Any one seeing the man at that moment would have called him handsome.

Presently, he went to his desk, wrote a note, and, calling a messenger-boy, despatched it at once.

DEAR HESTER:

Won't you dine with me to-night at the old place—Pierre's—about seven?

PHIL.

It was three o'clock as he put on his hat and coat and left his office.

"Can't do any more—or any less—to-day. I'll walk in the Park—maybe that will settle my nerves."

More than a year before, Haideen had met Hester Langdon. He was then a man past thirty, of whom it was said that he was a "coming architect;" she was twenty-two. Utterly unused to women of Hester's sort—he had spent his boyhood in a small Middle West village, slaved himself through Harvard, and managed two lean Winters of study in the Paris architectural schools, after which had come the years of grinding novitiate in New York—Haideen eyed her prettiness and her quick, flashing humor with a suspicion which kindled to admiration and later to humble reverence, in one evening.

He went home from that little studio-supper, whither some friend had dragged him, chewing irritably on an unlighted cigar, and, with the masculine unreason at an unattainable effect, railed cynically at the cause. "In heaven's name, what have I to do with—girls—anyway! Not a cent in the world and—and Lord knows they're not worth much to a man who's got his row to hoe. It's not for you, my boy."

Just why Haideen went again to that studio in the hope of—well, "any old thing that might be amusing," he put it, and eagerly asked Miss Langdon if he might walk home with her, he could not tell. Nor did he attempt

really to explain why, for two months, he called on Hester, took her to drive, or to dine at Pierre's—the suave old Italian's place down-town—and sent her flowers.

Then, all at once, he knew that he loved her. And, for another month, he stayed resolutely away, quite oblivious of the fact that he was bewildering and hurting her. He tried to avoid her, worked desperately at his office, until one day he met her face to face in the Park. She was passing him with a quiet, cool nod, when he stopped her suddenly.

"Don't," he said, helplessly, "don't, I can't bear it! I've missed you so!"

And she, since that day when they sat together in the Spring sunshine and talked hesitatingly and long, had been very gentle with him, and had understood.

It was part of his code that a man had no right to marry a girl until he had firmly established himself in business—"hit it off all right," as he said. The constantly recurring thought of this principle made him moody and morose. When he was with Hester, matters seemed easy and simple of solution, but, alone, the black shadow of his poverty and delayed success came between him and happiness; he almost lost faith in himself. And hourly his love of Hester grew.

It was in some such strained mental state as this that Haideen got the chance of entering a competition for the library. There were half-a-dozen firms in the contest—firms, like Garrett & Lidell, of formidable strength. Ordinarily, Haideen's confident belief in his own abilities would have buoyed him up in such a struggle, but now the deadly significance of the issue weighted him down like lead. Should he win—well, it meant money, and more than money—recognition, security, brilliant future, opportunity, and Hester. If he lost—

This condition of fretted ambition and harassed emotions might, in another man, have given just that prick of the spur to hesitating talent which would have resulted in the

accomplishment of a brilliantly successful coup; with Haideen it acted in quite an opposite manner—his creative powers seemed to be atrophied.

As he strode nervously through the Park, the burden of life would not fall from him. For lack of something which should seize him by the shoulders and shake out of him the vapors of an over-sensitive brain, he helplessly allowed his gloom of spirit to master him. Indeed, he took a sullen pleasure in turning up the stones of his career, to look on their under side—the side the angels call truth, he assured himself.

By the time, therefore, that Haideen met Hester at Pierre's, he was in his worst mood, and greeted her with great solemnity.

"What is it?" she queried, smilingly, between the soup and the entrée. "Has a draughtsman gone and put somebody's nursery next the coal-cellars, or made a billiard-room without any doors?"

"Neither," Haideen said, crisply; she did not speak again for some minutes.

Over their coffee, Hester tried again to rouse him from his discouraging silence. For some reason, Hester felt very happy that night.

"How goes the finest library ever planned?"

He looked at her in annoyance that any one could jest on that topic.

"Rotten—thanks!" and relapsed again.

She began to draw on the menu-card, and presently pushed it toward him.

"Look there! There's a library as is one! It's really praiseworthy. I think it will take a prize. Phil, do you mind my competing against you? I work so fast I could do several, if I put my mind to it, like the girl in the rhyme."

Haideen tried to smile, but the attempt was a failure.

"If you only understood," he sighed, impatiently; "if you knew!"

"What, Phil?"

"Oh, nothing, Hester."

It seemed to Hester very unfair, his

treatment of her. Pierre's was dear to them both, and the untidy, shabby old place was fraught with some of their tenderest memories. Phil was not nice to spoil the evening like that. She was repelled, and made to feel like a child. After a few moments, she rose.

"Shall we go? I'm rather tired to-night."

Once back at his lodgings, Haideen was overcome with shame. He cursed himself for a brute and a cad. He wanted to go and put his head in Hester's lap and be comforted.

"Poor little girl—I'm not fit for her. I'm a sullen beast!"

But, instead, he wrote a penitent note begging forgiveness, and sent it by a messenger. The gentle trust and merry sweetness of Hester's answer cut him still deeper.

The rest of his night was spent in uneasy tossings, deeper resolves to win out at last, and aching longings.

### III

MORNING brought Haideen no relief. He shut himself up in his little private room at the office and, for an hour, worked at the plans feverishly. At ten o'clock, he threw them aside.

"Great God! I think I could work my fingers to the very bone, and my brain to a little white spot if—if—only—no, I can't! It's foolish. She wouldn't. But if she would! Something's got to be done. I'm getting dippy over it—I'm all to the bad. I've got to know—I've got to—God knows I'd make it up to her—success is in my mind! I've got the ability. I can win, if—*I'll do it!*"

Haideen snatched his hat and left his office. He went straight to Hester Langdon's.

As he stood ringing the bell of the old-fashioned, rambling house on Fordham Heights where Hester lived alone with her uncle, he laughed grimly to himself.

"It's got to be settled—may as well be to-day as next year."

Hester came down-stairs quickly, a

little fluttering at her heart; Haideen had never come before in the morning. She looked at him, anxiously, as she entered the room. Haideen thought he had never seen her so pretty as she was in a simple, blue-cambric house dress with fresh white stock.

"Why, Philip," she smiled, giving him her hands. "Taking a holiday?"

Haideen wrung her hands in a convulsive grip, and then, striding over to the fireplace, he faced her resolutely.

"There's something I want to say, Hester. It's got to be said to-day—now. I love you, you know that. That day in the Park—you guessed it then, didn't you? I've loved you ever since the first time I saw you—they say it takes a chap that way sometimes. Once, I made a sort of resolve never to tell you about it until I could ask you to marry me and I could offer you a home, but I couldn't keep it. Then, you know, I entered the library competition. I think we both know what the winning of that will mean to me. It's got to be a sort of an obsession with me, the idea of winning, and yet, when I try to make the plans, I can't work. I—I can't do anything but think of you and want to be with you, Hester. Your face keeps getting between me and the drawing-board till I'm fairly crazy to see the real you, and, and—I have to give up work and come where you are.

"And, there's no use denying it, Hester, the plans are pretty bad. You've often said you wished you could help me. Dear, you can. If I knew once that you were mine, really mine, and not any other fellow's—were—were my wife, Hester, I believe, I know, I could win anything on earth. Little girl, you're the whole world to me!"

Haideen paused, irresolutely, his thin, eager face full of pleading.

Hester put her hands in his.

"Phil, dear, of course I love you. Let me help, dear boy."

Her eyes were wet with tears.

"Dearest, I want you to marry me at once—right away—this week! Lit-

tle woman, could—could you do me that—make that sacrifice?"

Hester gasped.

"Why, Phil—why—" She paused in sudden frightened embarrassment at the idea.

"My—my clothes, Phil—uncle—everything—I couldn't!" She tried, tremulously, to take it lightly. "You want to marry me to get me off your mind!" she accused him. But the romance of the idea had taken hold of her. It would be almost an elopement—with no family unpleasantness to follow. Her uncle never objected to anything. But in three days! "Twenty-three is young," she said, faintly.

Haideen's face fell. "I know it, Hester, I know it's a selfish thing to ask. I'm a brute, but—"

Hester smiled at him, trustingly. She was all on his side at once.

"I would be helping?" she asked.

For answer he held her close in his arms, and his eyes filled with quick tears.

"I'll do it, Phil," she whispered.

#### IV

THEY were married the following Saturday, and spent the next day bringing a degree of order into the tiny apartment they had taken. By nine o'clock Monday morning, Haideen was at work. An hour later, he knew that the bitterest part of his struggle was over. He was working whole-souledly, with a splendid freedom—all his old fervor illuminated by a new buoyancy. In the freshness of his insight, half the work of the past few weeks was thrown away. He saw now, as though by revelation, what his plan could be, and struck out boldly for it, with three weeks to accomplish the delicate, intricate conception. The inspiration had come, and he worked like one possessed, not lifting his head until darkness reminded him that he had eaten no luncheon. He straightened out his aching muscles with a laugh. His troubles

were over. Now he had only to work.

Hester's turn came now, and she learned the price of her sacrifice. The office was too far distant for Haideen to come home to meals while he was working nights, so Hester joined him down-town for dinner, and then went home alone. He came at midnight or later, fagged and silent.

She spent the first few days covering cushions and putting up curtains and buying what was absolutely necessary out of the six hundred dollars Haideen had borrowed. After these occupations were gone, she went about removing invisible dust that the little maid-servant had already removed, and tried to take enthusiastically to experiments on the gas-range. When she found herself drifting from room to room for no purpose but to stare vacantly out of their windows, she sternly took down her German books and tried to study; but the page was seldom turned. No one came to see her, of course—a person is not supposed to want visitors the first week of married life; and a sort of pride kept her from going to see any one. Others might not understand how beautiful it all was, how wonderful to help. And she was helping. That thought could bring back the brightness to her eyes even in the longest hours. She was always radiant when she joined Haideen down-town.

The second week was harder, for she had less to do, and was in no mood to go on independently with her own life. Haideen worked remorselessly, day and night, and, in spite of herself, an aggrieved note crept into her thoughts. This was not love as the novels had pictured it! Of course, he must work—she understood that; but he might be a little less absorbed, a little more appreciative, when he came home to her. She felt shut out in the cold, and brooded over it in the long, lonely afternoons.

Saturday, life put on a new color, for Haideen was to come home at dinner-time. She was to have him to herself for the whole evening. Never did

a simple programme take so much preparing. Hester was at it by nine in the morning, singing upliftedly. With Jenny's help, the dinner was prepared, the house set in order, an open fire made ready in the grate; a full hour was given to her own toilette. She was ready barely in time.

Haideen came in pale and tired, but full of a new serenity. He had shrunk from talking of his work these two weeks, and now she questioned him only with a half-timid:

"Well?"

"Hester," he answered, laying his hands on her shoulders with a certain solemnity, "since you married me I have done the best work of my whole life—or of Garrett's whole life, or of Lidell's! At this moment, I am the greatest living architect. You wait!"

"Oh, how beautiful!" she sighed. "I knew it, anyway. And I am the greatest living cook," she added.

"You wait!"

To her, dinner was but a prelude to the joy of this whole perfect evening together. She had a thousand things to talk about, things that had been gathering all the week, but she saved them jealously till they should be settled down in lovely domestic intimacy. While she was attending to her precious cut-glass with her own hands, she sent Haideen to see to the fire and pull out the couch. It was fifteen minutes before she followed him, and, at the door, she stopped short with a stifled laugh, then entered on tiptoe. The couch was drawn up by the fire, and on it lay Haideen, fast asleep.

"My poor, tired man!" she murmured, sitting down by the hearth to wait till he should have had his nap out. Half an hour went by, then an hour, but he still slept. Hester looked toward him wistfully, and once or twice rose and stood beside him; but he looked so tired, she could not waken him, and went back, dejectedly, to her solitary seat. Half-past nine—the long evening they had planned together was nearly gone! Two tears slipped down her cheeks, but she

closed her eyes and breathed sternly till those that would have followed them were vanquished. Ten o'clock struck. It was too hard—the one evening he had set aside for her! She had been singing about it all day, and it meant so little to him that he could waste it sleeping! She took a book and seated herself by the lamp, her head held very proudly. Even when she heard Haideen start and look about, she did not lift her eyes.

"Why, I have been asleep!" he informed her.

Hester said nothing, and turned a page. One sympathetic word for her disappointment would have softened her at once, but Haideen, still half dazed, did not realize the situation. He stretched, sighed, and suppressed a yawn.

"Whew, I'm tired!" he exclaimed, dropping his forehead into his hands. "Is it bed-time?"

"Half-past ten," she answered, indifferently. "You'd better go—I want to finish my book."

He turned sharply about.

"What is the matter, Hester?"

He did not even understand! She threw down her book and rose from her chair.

"Oh, nothing!" she exclaimed, impetuously. "Only, I have been all alone for two weeks, and I had rather counted on this evening—that is all. It really meant something to me."

Haideen tried to answer patiently and reasonably—the worst course he could have taken. Hester was hurt beyond reasonableness, and a host of injured thoughts that she had been fighting all the week came rushing back, suddenly justified.

"If I had known that it would be like this—"

When she came to that, she knew she had gone too far, but the struggle had been gathering, and it had to come.

Haideen, strained and overtired, kept wilfully to his high ground of logic, and showed his pain only by an increased reasonableness.

"I have realized how hard it was for you all along," he said, temperately,

"but I thought—well, never mind that. I must work every moment this next week. The question is, how am I going to make it less dismal for you?"

Poor little Hester! If he had come to her, and taken her hands in his, and told her again he loved her; if he had known that it is a woman's way to suffer gladly great things, but that she cannot bear the silent struggle, the suppression of all emotion until the crucial period be past—if Haideen had known this—but he did not.

He had lived too long in a world of men where the one who falters is not taken by the hand and held to the path, where weakness is the signal of defeat, where the ranks close quickly when one falls. It is possible that, in his relations with women, no more precarious moment occurs in a man's life than this which confronted Haideen. He glanced at Hester half-curiously, half-impatiently.

"Well?" he added.

She turned from him with ill-concealed resentment.

"Don't, I beg," she said, in a false voice, "mind me in the least. I dare say I can get on—alone."

His irritation was rapidly getting the better of him.

"Alone! What do you mean?"

She had meant nothing. But his words stimulated her pique.

"You have no time, of course, for me—now we are married. Before that you seemed— Oh, well, we're getting to be quite traditionally married, aren't we?" she laughed, bitterly.

Haideen flung himself back on the divan in silence. Against her will, in the strange perversity that assails a tired and nervous brain, Hester kept on talking. What she said did not vex him so much as the tones of her voice, which, to his racking brain, took on a dull monotony.

This was his dream of home-happiness, was it? This was the girl who was to be his comfort, his ideal of stanch comradeship and superb confidence, his understanding, tender wife! He might have known how it would end. Suddenly, he caught a

sentence of hers uttered in that airy, bland tone which can do more to influence a temper than can a curse,—"made a mistake, perhaps. They tell me most people do, and after they're married they—"

"Good God!" he burst out. "Mistake—mistake! You make me think so! You make me wish— Well, it's done now."

His eyes sparkled, angrily. The long days of indoor toil, the lack of sleep and exercise, the deep anxiety over his marriage, and the competition had done their work.

Hester shrank from him, fearfully.

"Don't talk of mistakes! You don't know, you haven't seen, how I am working, how I need every moment of rest and quiet to keep my brain in trim. You couldn't guess it was for you—no, I oughtn't to have expected that a girl would know. And yet you talk airily of mistakes! What's your anxiety to mine? What's your little trouble to the big issues that are going to make or break me—and you? Don't cry—that won't help any now. For God's sake, let me alone, don't speak to me till this contest is over, and then—we'll fix up a way—do something—I don't care what—but in the name of all that's decent—*let me alone!*"

Haideen was too unstrung to watch the effect of his words. Without a look at his wife, he strode grimly into his room and slammed the door.

With a white face and with that bitter hunger of heart and pain of spirit of a girl whose experience has never brought her face to face with the desperate anger of one she loves, Hester sat cold and still in the tiny apartment.

Hers were the bewilderment and hurt womanhood which have lost the power of analysis. Her emotions were numb from the blow. Protestations, anger, forgiveness, retaliation were beyond her. She shivered miserably. Presently, so strong is the force of our habit in any crisis, she rose and crept into her room, and toward morning fell into a sort of stupor from which she

did not awaken until late. When she came out, Haideen, who took no Sunday at present, had already gone to his office. She looked helplessly about, but there was no message from him.

"Very well, then!" she said to herself, her heart hardening again.

Phil's pipe lay in her work-basket; Phil's architectural magazines littered the table; Phil's cigarette ashes were in dull-gray heaps in the grate. Everything seemed to be Phil's. The sight hurt her. She felt terribly lonely and quite out of his life. The scenes of the previous night returned to her, but they were unreal and clouded. She was too apathetic to think, or to care, strongly. Only one thing was in her mind—to get away. He wanted it. She wanted it, too.

"I'll go home to uncle," she sighed.

After a desultory attempt to set the rooms to rights, she gave it up, and putting a few articles in a hand-bag, she dragged herself away without a backward look.

## V

THE outdoor air put life in her. As she walked on, she recovered her poise, and her resentment grew keen toward her husband. Her uncle was childishly pleased to see her, and not in the least surprised. Her vague explanation seemed to him perfectly satisfactory. Hester spent a most wretched day, talking brightly about her experiences as a housekeeper, playing on the disused piano, and seeking domestic wisdom with vivid intelligence from her Aunt Lucia, a keen-eyed, vigorous woman who had taken Hester's place in the household. She had never known this aunt very well, and she quailed a little now under the honest, searching look that she once or twice encountered. It forced her to double her defensive gaiety.

"And you are going to stay overnight?" Aunt Lucia asked, abruptly, in the middle of her cheerfulness.

"Yes, if uncle will let me," answered Hester, brightly; and then she

went back to the piano, where she could cry unnoticed.

Dinner-time nearly broke her down, with the thought of Haideen going out for his solitary meal. Then she remembered that he had let her come away, and she set her trembling lips, and swallowed the food that was dust and ashes in her mouth.

Later in the evening, Aunt Lucia came and sat beside her while her uncle dozed. The kind, strong presence was subtly comforting. She let her head drop back on the older woman's shoulder with an unconscious sigh.

"You must have had a great deal to bear, Hester, with this competition on hand," her aunt said, after a pause. "I know how a man is swallowed up by his work sometimes—and how hard it is for a woman to understand it."

Hester said nothing, and presently she went on, as though musingly:

"It is wonderful what one can bear, when one cares enough! It is this power of cheerful enduring that makes women do very heroic things, sometimes. Do you remember your great-aunt Cordelia—my mother?"

"Very faintly," said Hester, glad to change the subject.

"The last year of her life, she told me something—it gives one an idea what a woman can rise to. I don't think she would have minded my telling you. When she had been married about ten years, her health broke down, and she was practically an invalid for a long time. Then she went away for six months and took treatment, so that in the Spring she came back a well woman. She said that, when my father met her at the station, she knew in two minutes that there was something wrong. He was very cheerful, very kind, very glad to see her, yet, under everything, she felt trouble. And very soon she saw what it was. She had a cousin, Minnie DeWitt, a beautiful girl, perfectly unscrupulous when she wanted amusement. And she had wanted it that Winter. As a result, she had simply dazzled my father. He

was in love with her. He was fighting it desperately, and hiding it with every bit of power he possessed. Yet, in three days, my mother had seen it, and, on the morning of the fourth, she came across some little token—something that had belonged to Minnie—among her husband's things that forced her to believe and face it."

"Oh, how dreadful!" exclaimed Hester. "What did she do?"

"Of course, her first impulse was to do everything an injured wife usually does. She would accuse him, renounce him; she was ready for a big scene. And then, suddenly, in the middle of her anger, she saw it from his side—his fight to kill the feeling, his bitter shame over it, his desperate effort to spare her the pain of seeing it. And she said that, all at once, she was overwhelmingly sorry for him, so sorry that she cried far more bitterly than she could ever have cried for herself. Then she sat down and faced the situation. She knew that, if she gave him up, there could be no happiness for him with Minnie; so, clearly, the only way was to help him get over it."

"Oh, how could she!" murmured Hester.

"She was a big woman, my dear. Well, she realized that she could not go about cheerfully with this in her mind, and so her first act was to put it out of her mind. She said that it was like pushing some one out of the room and holding the door shut by main strength—that for weeks she never lost the feeling of clinging desperately to a door that some one was trying, even more desperately, to open.

"But she kept it shut, and, mind you, she was now a well woman. She wore pretty clothes, and had pleasant people at the house—and Minnie very often, clever woman! For, in spite of the girl's beauty, she seemed cheap and silly beside a woman like my mother. My father always found her sweet and strong and serene, and very soon she saw her old power over him coming back. She had kept the door shut so faithfully that all the bitterness was gone. She said that when it was over

she simply felt as though she had nursed him through a serious illness. He stood watching her one day for some minutes, and then he came over and took her in his arms. 'Let's go away somewhere together, just us two!' he said; and she knew she had won. And she never told him that she had seen and understood."

"Oh, I couldn't have done it!" whispered Hester, after a long pause.

"Yes, you could, my dear, if you cared enough. A big love can bear anything."

"You poor child!" Aunt Lucia added, under her breath, for Hester had suddenly buried her face in her hands. "If you're homesick and want to go home to-night, my dear," she said, quietly, rising to look at the clock, "you needn't waken your uncle. I will explain to him."

Hester kissed her silently, and slipped out of the room.

There was a light in the little drawing-room when she softly pushed open the door. Under the lamp lay a sheet of letter-paper. Hester saw, "Dearest and Best," written across it as she stole past. Haideen was stretched on the couch, one arm hanging over its edge, his thin, tired face sharply outlined against a dark pillow as he slept. Hester dropped down on the floor beside him and, laying her cheek against his arm, waited till he should waken and find her there.

## VI

SATURDAY night, at the last possible moment, Haideen handed in his drawings. Experts were coming from different cities to judge them, and the verdict was expected at the end of the following week.

"If I win, we will have a historic wedding-trip," he promised her. "We will go down to the Springs for a month and ride and drive and do everything you like best."

"And if you lose," she suggested—"of course, you won't, but if—couldn't we have a little wedding-trip anyway, to Jersey City, or somewhere?"

"Yes, I think we could manage Jersey City," he admitted, gravely.

Friday night they dined down-town in somewhat tremulous gaiety. They were carrying out their determination to eat, drink and be merry with some success when Garrett bore down on them, flinging a familiar hand on Haideen's reluctant shoulder.

"Me deadly rival," he laughed. "Mrs. Haideen, which of us do you back?"

"The better man," said Hester, with critical eyebrows.

Garrett laughed again.

"Very good! Oh, well, you can't tell in these things," he said. "Morris may get it, or you, or I, or even one of the others. Nothing is sure till we get our notices. Hope for the best!"

And he went on his loud-voiced way, leaving them staring dejectedly at their plates.

"Hateful, boasting person!" murmured Hester.

"Yes, but he has a right to boast," Haideen protested with a sigh.

Presently, they decided that they did not want any dessert, and went sadly home. Haideen read aloud persistently the rest of the evening, and neither knew a word of what was read, though Hester never saw the book afterward without a dreadful memory of sick, dismayed suspense.

In the morning, they breakfasted in determined cheerfulness, with no men-

tion of architecture, and then Hester announced that she had errands to do down-town.

"I may as well go down with you," she said, casually, not meeting his eyes.

"Suppose you do," Haideen agreed.

They looked over the morning papers on the elevated train, and exchanged items of interest. They even tried to disagree over politics, but Hester found her jaw trembling, and had to let herself be argued down.

"I will come up to the office with you," she said, as they left the train, and tried bravely to keep the conversation going. But it was too hard. They entered the building in pale silence.

Haideen turned over his letters, one after another, and then his hand paused, suddenly.

Hester leaned against the table and waited, with icy fingers and strained throat, while he slit open the envelope and unfolded the type-written sheet. Her eyes clung to his face, but, for an interminable minute, it told nothing.

Then she saw the color flood back to it with sudden radiance. He laughed and held out his arms to her, letting the sheet fall to the ground.

"Then it isn't Jersey City?" she sobbed against his coat.

"It isn't Jersey City!" he whispered.



## EQUIVOCAL

**S**HE—Constance is far too good for him.

**H**E—Oh, well, it won't last long. She is marrying him to reform him.



## A SHORT CUT

**M**AY BONDCLIPPER—Tell me the quickest way to Jack's heart.

**G**RACE CANDOR—Through your pocket-book.

## THE DREAM HARBOR

WINDS of the South, from the sunny beaches  
Under the headland, call to me;  
And I am sick for the purple reaches,  
Olive-fringed by an idle sea,

Where low waves of the South are calling  
Out of the silent sapphire bay,  
And slow tides are rising, falling,  
Under the cliffs where the ripples play.

Odors of vineyard and grove come thronging  
In through my casement open wide;  
And I would follow the dull, sweet longing  
Unto the slope of the warm hillside.

And I would sit in the low-hung arbor,  
Letting the hours go drifting by,  
Watching the boats in the little harbor,  
Watching the changeless purple sky.

And I would think of the happy chorus  
Sung by men in the ancient days,  
When they could say: "There is life before us,  
Love, and dreams, which the gods may praise.

"And let each, as his brightest duty,  
Seek for the dream that shall be most sweet,  
Weaving it into a song of beauty,  
Lifting it up to the high gods' feet."

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE.



## LIKELY TO REMAIN UNSOLVED

ETHEL—Was it his money that made a fool of him, or did Nature get the  
start of it?

RUTH—That will ever remain a mystery. He was born wealthy.



IT is not surprising that truth lies at the bottom of a well. It has always had  
cold water thrown on it.

## IN NEWER JOYS

IN newer joys than those we used to know,  
 We spend our days, and find them goodly so;  
 As other folk forget, we, too, forget—  
 The moment claims us, like a gay Pierrette  
 Who sings her song, and laughs, and turns to go.

The world goes fast—new lover, friend and foe,  
 Claim each their turn, for each the scene is set;  
 Yesterday's play—is that remembered yet  
 In newer joys?

We dance and drift like leaves the four winds blow;  
 Our laughter is so quick, our tears so slow;  
 So much we mock, so little we regret!  
 See, now, I laugh, although my eyes are wet,  
 At that poor love we buried long ago  
 In newer joys.

JOHN WINWOOD.



## SHE HADN'T THE HEART TO

L AURA—Cholly doesn't know it all.  
 ALICE—No; but it would be a pity to undeceive him.



## HEARD AT NIGHT

FIRST NIGHT-WATCHMAN—You look badly. What's the matter?  
 SECOND NIGHT-WATCHMAN—I'm troubled with insomnia.



## THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE

THE PLAYWRIGHT—Yes, sir, I put a great deal of thought into that play.  
 THE CRITIC—Whose?

# THE LAST GIFT

By Theodosia Garrison

ALL the bad fairy-godmothers had come to the christening because the child was a girl-child, and they had held a grudge against one of her grandmothers, Eve by name, that they repaid little by little to each woman of her race.

The baby lay asleep in her cradle, and the nurse drowsed in a chair beside her, and heard and saw nothing, though, had she been awake, she would only have thought that the firelight threw strange, wavering shadows about the room.

The oldest godmother spoke first, chuckling above her staff, as she hobbled to the cradle and leaned above the sleeping child.

"Take you my gift," she said, "for I gave a like one to your mother before you. I give you envy for those things you shall lack, ever and always. You shall crave beauty and never, even in your own eyes, be beautiful. You shall desire wit and know that your tongue falters on the word. With the things you possess, you will never be content, craving those you desire. I give you envy!"

She touched the child on the heart, and stumbled back into the shadows, and another took her place.

"Girl-child," she mumbled, "I give you fear—the little fine fears that prick at the heart. You shall distrust fate and your lovers and yourself, and never be confident. You will believe with your eyes, your lips, but never with your heart."

And she too faded into the shadows, and another stood beside the child, and laid withered fingers on her head.

"I give you sense of duty for task-

mistress," she said. "And it shall keep its fingers on your wrist forever, and stand between the lovely things of life and yourself like a black wall, and it shall whip your pagan soul into submission when you rebel. I give you duty, girl-child!"

"And I," said the one who took her place, "give you the anguish of too much loving. You shall love deeply where you are loved lightly, strongly where you are loved weakly. You will know the sting of the careless smile and the anguish of the missed kiss, and the cruelty of the beloved to the unloved. For this gift was your mother's and your mother's mother before her."

And the child stirred and cried sharply in its sleep, and the nurse started and slept again, for the room was still.

And another crept out of the shadows, and still another, and each chuckled as she bestowed her gift. But the last said nothing, but turned with the others to see the unbidden guest who stood upon the threshold.

The oldest godmother grinned. "You have come too late," she said. "You good fairies have a way of being belated at times, and we have given our gifts. What can you do now?"

The good fairy-godmother shook her head, sadly.

"Not much," she said. "What gifts have you given her?" They pointed to their gifts triumphantly. "It is too late," they said. "These things are given, and you cannot destroy them, not one."

The good fairy looked, and frowned, and considered a moment. Then she went to the cradle and kissed the baby lightly on the forehead.

"Oh, you poor little soul," she said. "I can't take one away, but I can give you something, too, and it will be such a gift that you can bear these miserable things without being too unhappy. I give you something that will take the sting from life, that will lead you over the rough places and be a light in dark ones. No woman that possesses this can suffer too much, and no woman can love beyond heartbreak who carries such a talisman in her breast. I give you something that tears the mask from tragedy and shows the farce, that makes duty companionable and takes the edge from grief. I give you the great mitigator and compensator, and it should console you to know that very, very few women possess it."

And she kissed the baby lightly, and

laughed in the infuriated faces of the wicked godmothers.

"After all, your gifts are practically harmless now," she said, and vanished in the first ray of the morning sunshine, and, in a moment, the shadows had disappeared and the room was empty.

The baby woke, and yawned, and looked at her nurse.

"I am very hungry," she thought, "and I suppose if I howled I might be fed. But, after all, how absurd it is that I should wake up first." And she blinked her eyes and gurgled enjoyingly to herself over her thumbs.

For the gift the good fairy-godmother had bestowed had been a practical and philosophical sense of humor.



## TWO LOVES

ONE was a child's romance,  
A girl's bewildering dream,  
Woven of fire and dew  
And moonlight's silver gleam;  
Of the fragrance of the rose,  
The glory of the stars,  
The flash of sparkling waters,  
The sunset's golden bars!  
A thing of smiles and blushes,  
Quick thrills and throbbing heart,  
A strange, mysterious glamour  
That bade the tear-drops start.

One was a woman's love,  
Woven of many strands,  
Richer than braided gold,  
Stronger than iron bands;  
A love that holier grew  
Through all the changeful years,  
That clasped close hands with joy,  
Yet wavered not for tears.  
A love that loved through all things,  
Through sorrow, pain and death—  
Through all the bliss and all the bane  
To which life answereth!

JULIA C. R. DORR.

# IMOGEN'S HOST

By Anne O'Hagan

## PROLOGUE

27508 MONROE STREET,

TOLEDO, O.

**M**Y DEAREST POLLY: Whether it will surprise you or not, I cannot guess, but my engagement is broken. I cannot write about it, even to you. Albert is all that is kind and forbearing, and visits me with no reproaches for the miserable five years of caprice through which I have put him. I am ashamed and remorseful, but—oh, Polly, I am so glad! I could dance along the streets because I don't need to marry any one! It's like waking out of a nightmare. I am rid of that smothering sense of responsibility—you know what I mean, I am not one of those fortunate women who were meant for marriage, I am sure. For no one could be more worthy of love and devotion than Albert, and indeed I do esteem him, and I am endlessly fond of him. But marry him! How could I have thought that I should ever be able to do that? And if not him, whom I have known all my life, who has never been harsh with my whims, who is goodness and gentleness personified, then assuredly no one! I wish I were the other sort of woman, but I'm not. And I'm glad I found it out in something like time!

There are horrid details, of course. Toledo is not a large place, as you may recall. And the circle in which poor Albert and I move is a limited one, and there are bound to be awkward meetings. So I'm off to Italy for the Winter. When I come home, I hope he'll be engaged again—he's bound to

be; he's doomed to matrimony and domesticity—simply doomed!

Well, en route, I shall arrive in New York next Saturday morning, sailing thence the following Wednesday. I am going to stay at the Hudson, which they tell me is a quiet hostelry adapted to the lone spinster on her travels. I shall expect to hear from you there. Do you realize that we haven't met since the Summer before your marriage, four years ago?

Dear old Polly, I am so glad to think of seeing you again!

Always your devoted,  
IMOGEN FARING.

November the fifteenth.  
Mrs. James Leigh Whitford, Wuthering Heights, New Jersey.

WUTHERING HEIGHTS, N. J.  
MY DEAREST IMOGEN:

Thank goodness that engagement of yours is broken! I don't want to be heartless, but you were no more suited to each other than—I don't know what. But I haven't time to talk about it. Jim's mother is packing to go, and I must hurry to help her. She's been making us a visit. You are to come to us Saturday afternoon in time for dinner. We won't hear of anything else. You are to stay with us until Tuesday, anyway—you can't have shopping and things to do when you are going abroad. I'll enclose a time-card with the good trains marked, but they're all good; we're only forty-five minutes from New York. By the way, no suburbanite is ever more than that. I'll come in town to meet you, if I can. Anyway, I'll call you up—no, we won't make any plan

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that could possibly keep you waiting to hear from me when you might want to be at the steamship office. You'll come on the six-thirteen from Christopher street! No backing out, now!

It's all stuff and nonsense about your not marrying. You only feel that way because you weren't in love with Albert—my dear, you couldn't be! Of course, he's a saint and all that, but—well, you aren't, and it must have been a frightful strain trying to live up to your conception of your duty in the matter.

Till Saturday then! Jim sends his love. He's so glad you're coming, and, of course, I am, dearest Imogen.

Your loving,  
POLLY.

November the eighteenth.

Miss Imogen Faring, Hotel Hudson, Gramercy Park, New York City.

P. S.—Opened this to put in the time-card which I forgot before.

P. S.—Opened it again to say that I'd never, never forgive you if you didn't come. Six-thirteen from the New York side.

Office of the Hotel Hudson; two-twenty-five P.M., Saturday afternoon, November the twenty-first.

"Hello. Yes'm, this is the Hudson. Missis—please spell the name. F-A-R-I—Oh, Miss Faring. Please hold the wire a minute.—Say, Charlie, see is Miss Faring, Toledo party that came about noon, in. No?—Hello! No'm, Miss Faring ain't in. Yes'm. Please hold the wire a minute—Charlie, gimme a pencil—Hello! Now I can take the message. 'Mrs.'—what's the name? Please spell it. W-H-I-T-F-O-R-D. 'Mrs. Whitford wishes Miss Faring to meet her and Mr. Whitford at the Martin for dinner at seven—a quarter before seven?—'to go to the theatre afterward. They will take the twelve-five train out, so will Miss Faring please send her bag to the Christopher street station? Mrs. Whitford will explain change of plan to Miss Faring when they meet. If Miss Faring is too tired to go to the theatre, will she please meet the party

at the twelve-five'—what's that? You'll call for her for the twelve-five? All right, ma'am. Read it over to you, ma'am?

"That right, ma'am? Oh, sure, ma'am! She'll get it. Good-bye!"

Office of the Hotel Hudson, five-five P.M., Saturday, November the twenty-first.

"Any messages for you, ma'am? What name, please? Faring? No, Miss Faring, nothing but a package from Stern's, collect two dollars and thirty-five cents. All right, Miss Faring. Hansom or coupé? Hansom? Have it here by a quarter of six, Miss Faring."

## I

THERE were two carriages waiting at the little station when Imogen stepped from the train. One was obviously a private equipage, and toward it she looked with expectancy until she saw it pre-empted by the man with gray Dundrearys who had read the financial supplement of the *Post* all the way out. By that time, the other vehicle had been engaged by the parcel-laden woman who had strewn the train floor with bundles during her progress toward the door. Imogen looked rather blankly about her.

"How funny of the Whitfords!" she said to herself.

The little group of men and women deposited by the train scattered in the silvery whiteness of the frosty Autumn evening. Imogen went into the station.

"I beg your pardon," she said to the ticket-agent, who was apparently closing the office for the night, "but—I expected some one from Mrs. Whitford's to meet me. Can you tell me how to reach her house?"

"Cross the tracks and take the left-hand street up the hill," replied the functionary, locking the ticket-closet behind him. "It's next to the last house on the street—right-hand side. You can't miss it. White colonial,

and sure to be lit up—it always is of an evening."

"Is it far?"

"Six and a half minutes," was the finely accurate and satisfactory rejoinder.

Imogen's heart lightened, for she did not know that no dwelling in a suburb is ever allowed to be more than seven minutes from the station by suburban calculation. She seized her suit-case, cheerfully. Heavy as it was, she could carry it so short a distance without discomfort.

"It's funny of the Whitfords," she said to herself, with some asperity, when she had toiled up the long slope of the street. Already she had walked ten minutes, shifting the heavy bag once or twice. Now she put it down and panted. Although she had reached the top of the hill, the road still stretched far before her. The mellow lights of comfortable houses, set back among bare trees, glowed alluringly. But the white colonial house of brilliantly lighted aspect seemed still remote.

"If this isn't exactly like Polly Brown!" sputtered Imogen, indignantly. "To insist upon my spending Sunday in this forsaken suburb, and then forgetting all about it! I wonder if the Whitford person whom she married is as bad as she is, or if she even forgot to mention to him that I'm coming."

She took up her bag and trudged on again. The boundary road finally came into view. The next to the last house on the right-hand side of the street loomed large and white in the shivering moonlight. Not a light glowed in any window, except where the cold brightness of the moon concentrated on a broad pane and intensified the chill, inhospitable look of the place. Imogen's anger gave place to dismay.

She walked up the curving driveway, mounted the shallow flight of steps that led to the piazza, and rang the bell. It seemed to her that the desolate reverberations of its peal sounded endlessly through the house.

So it was with the succeeding rings—the second, third and fourth.

Imogen was cold. She was hungry; she was tired. Her arms ached from lugging the heavy bag. She would have been furiously angry but for her fright. Something had happened to the Whitfords, that was sure! They had been called home—some one had died. But the servants—surely Polly had once written exuberantly that her poverty was made bearable by an angel cook, a duck of a waitress and a perfect lamb of a man-servant!

When Imogen had pressed the electric button and banged the brass knocker vainly for ten minutes, she looked about her, helplessly. She recalled the locking of the station. She recalled her airy discarding of the time-table when she had once achieved the six-thirteen. She shivered at the thought of the long walk and the pneumonia-inviting wait on the station bench, for—who could tell how long?

Well, a young woman who is about to tour Europe alone should not be overcome by a small suburban difficulty like this one. Imogen beat her hands against her sides to warm them; she descended from the piazza to the graveled walk and reconnoitered for a safe hiding-place for her valise. She shoved it under the steps, and then she crossed the frozen lawn separating the Whitfords' house from their neighbors'—a Queen Anne structure whose stone and weathered wood shone with one or two ruddy, hospitable-looking apertures.

There was a long and disconcerting pause before her ringing of the door-bell was answered. She had begun to think herself in a village of evil enchantment where doors never opened, servants never appeared at summons, hosts and hostesses slept on in a magic sleep, forgetful of guests. She had, too, the impression that she was watched while she stood tapping cold and impatient feet upon the piazza flooring. She looked nervously and irritably over her shoulder; she darted a suspicious glance up toward

the overhanging window of a turret. But she saw no lurking figure, caught the gleam of no sly, inquisitive eye to justify her dread.

Then, suddenly, noiselessly, the door swung back and, beyond a vestibule, a big hall glowed warm before her—a fire leaping in its stone chimney, rugs spread warmly on its polished floor, an inviting chair drawn between the fire and the big, lamp-lighted, book-cluttered table. Imogen could scarcely restrain herself from pushing by the man who stood between her and warmth and comfort. For a second, she forgot to make her explanations. Then she blurted out her questions and her apologies, tactlessly. At their conclusion, the man still hesitated, blocking the way. Imogen frowned at him.

She could not decide whether he was a member of the family or a servant. His garments were not badges of his station, and his face was nondescript. His hesitation to help Imogen was that of an uncertain hireling, but that was the only distinctively menial mark about him. Finally, he opened the door a few grudging inches.

"Won't you come in?" he said, with something foreign in his laborious English. "It is impossible for me to conjecture as to the whereabouts of the Whitford household beyond hazarding a guess that the servants have gone to the ball at Wuthering Castle. Mrs. Wuthering's servants are the hosts at such a festivity once a year, and all those in menial employ in the neighborhood are invited. Most of the employers, therefore, dine in town that night. The—the ladies of this household do; they are also from home to-night, I am regretful to inform you. Otherwise, they would have been charmed to entertain you until the arrival of their neighbor and your friend. As it is, if you will sit down and warm yourself, I will procure you some refreshment. If you will remain here until Mrs. Whitford returns, I think I can make you comfortable. There is undoubtedly some perfectly simple explanation of this awkward contretemps."

The contrast between the amazingly

sonorous diction of the man and the monotonous quality of his voice, puzzled Imogen. But she dismissed problems. To sink into the Morris chair, to put her feet toward the fender, to eat and drink—these were enough. And whether these privileges were offered her by a servant or his employer, she did not care.

"Mrs. Whitford," she said, smiling brilliantly upon him, "will be grateful to you. And I am—very."

"It is nothing," answered he.

He departed through the portières at the right of the hall, and, in a few minutes, Imogen heard the cheerful clatter of plates and forks. Very swiftly he was back with a tray spread with professional neatness. He must be a servant! Whatever he was, the thin-sliced ham and mutton, the bread, the sweet butter, the small bottle of claret, all appealed enormously to Imogen. She had made a late breakfast on the train in the morning, and had neglected luncheon and tea in the hurry of her business. Now she found herself ravenous.

"I am starving," she confessed. "I should have died if I had had to go back to New York dinnerless. But thanks to your hospitality—"

She paused to give him an opportunity to declare himself master or man. But he merely took advantage of the pause to say:

"Now, if you please, I must return to an undertaking upon which I had just entered at the time of your arrival. You will find reading-matter here. The evening trains from New York arrive at eleven and twelve-fifty. Mrs. Whitford will surely be on one of them. And so, also, will Mrs. Leech."

He withdrew, swiftly and noiselessly, before Imogen had a chance to inquire whether it was Mrs. Leech's house in which she was. She did not greatly care as she turned to her food. Never had bread and meat seemed to her so delicious, never condiments so appetizing, never wine so warming and penetrating! Delight in physical comfort flowed through her veins.

The sense of slight adventure also pleased her. She could hear herself telling the story of this night with great effect later. How shocked the correct Albert would be over such an awkwardness, how grieved over her position—alone in a strange house, in a strange town, with one mysterious man moving queerly about it!

And, as for her, she liked it all. It was adventure of a mild sort. It was also comfort after the long railroad trip and the hurried errands of the day. Comfort, warmth, food, wine—she was growing drowsy. She must not fall asleep. She must read. She reached vaguely toward the table with her hand, but it wavered and fell back upon the arm of her chair. A sigh fluttered from her lips, her dark head bent sidewise toward her shoulder, her white eyelids—very white against the thick blackness of the lashes that fringed them—trembled for a second above her eyes. Then they covered those blue wells of light. Imogen slept.

## II

It was a single stroke of a silvery-toned clock that woke her. She had something of a struggle to shake off the heavy languor that weighed her limbs, her chest, her head; it was like the effort to overcome a breathless nightmare, this attempt to rouse herself. And there was something of the menacing quality of nightmare in the slumber from which she tried to recover. Before she managed to open her heavy eyes, to move her hands, before she was conscious of her whereabouts or condition, the knowledge that safety lay only in ridding herself of her burden of sleep was strong in her. Finally she succeeded. A long-drawn, quivering sigh announced her return to consciousness. Consciousness was followed by a sudden appreciation of her position. She pushed her toque—a foolish conglomeration of velvet, violets and moleskin that somehow achieved the impossible and looked becoming as well as smart—

back from her eyes, over which it had fallen.

"I hope that you are quite rested, madam."

Imogen half started to her feet, and then leaned back. A man sat opposite her—a very different person from her entertainer of—how many hours ago?

There was no question as to this one's status. Beneath his corduroy knickerbockers, heavy woolen stockings and great walking boots stuck out prominently. A rough, shabby, unmistakably good Norfolk jacket clothed the upper part of his massive frame, and the pipe which he held in his fingers had been colored by much loving smoking. His eyes, brown and daring above the strong nose, danced upon Imogen. His mouth, ample, strong and kind, smiled beneath a close, rough, dark mustache. In one astonished, alarmed glance, Imogen knew more of his looks than she had ever before known of those of any living man.

"I—who are you?" she faltered. It was not what she should have said, but the leadenness of sleep still bound her mind, though her body had shaken itself free.

"Pardon me if I say that I think that question belongs more properly to me."

Imogen sat straighter, and tried to recall some dignity to her bearing.

"You are not the one who let me in," she averred.

"That is quite true. And you did not let me in, though I had forgotten my keys and hammered on the door for ten minutes. I had to enter by the pantry window. So we are quits there."

"Are you—are you Mr. Leech?"

"My good girl," said the man, impatiently—and the tone and appellation were like a cold shower to Miss Faring—"my good girl, it is your presence, not mine, that needs explanation, though I am afraid the one you will make will not tally with the evidence already in my possession."

"Are you insane?" demanded Imo-

gen, haughtily. "His good girl," indeed! "Evidence!" Undoubtedly he was insane, for all his look of abounding bodily and mental vigor. Insane—that was it! And the other one was his keeper!

"Alienists tell me that we are all a little demented, that none of us could escape a really conscientious commission on lunacy. But beyond such mania as is common to the whole race, I think I may be acquitted. However, my sanity is not the pressing question. What are you doing here? Where are your accomplices?"

Imogen smiled faintly, but ingratiatingly, upon the lunatic. She could see no clock, she did not dare to look at her watch. But, perhaps, Polly Whitford's house was open now! Perhaps, she could make its shelter before this maniac killed her. Meantime, she must humor him somewhat.

"My accomplices?" Her voice was tremulous. "There was only one, and I don't know where he is. He went up the stairs. Perhaps"—she spoke almost wheedlingly to the handsome giant—"perhaps, if you were to go up, you might find him?"

The giant leaned back and laughed. Laughed? Roared! It was a mellow roar, and Imogen had a swift sense of delight in the sound of it, even while she was divided between rage and terror.

"Won't you?" she begged.

Her blue eyes were fixed steadily and pleadingly upon him. She was trying to keep him under control by the power of a concentrated gaze. He stopped laughing and stared back at her, and a curious change came over his expression. Mirth gave way to pity and a sort of fierce disgust.

"Don't be a fool!" he commanded, roughly. "What the devil did you ever take up this sort of thing for? You don't look—"

"I don't care for profanity," Imogen interrupted, forgetting in a crimsoning moment of annoyance that she might be dealing with a lunatic.

He looked at her again with a sort of amazement and admiration.

"You certainly have the cheek of the dev—I beg your ladyship's pardon! You have sublime impudence! You little house-breaker—to object to profanity! Perhaps, I should apologize for smoking in your presence?"

He began to fill his pipe, but did not remove his gaze from Imogen's white face. As for that young woman, anger dominated fright in her heart. She was accustomed to deference from men, to admiration of an almost servile sort; her Albert had spoiled her somewhat, to tell the truth. Her eyes were as blue and as angry as the lightnings in a Summer sky at night. She arose.

"No one," she declared, with icy vehemence, "is insane enough to be allowed such insolence. You may do whatever you please, but I will not submit to this any longer. I shall call for help."

She darted toward the door, but the man was after her.

"Very clever, my dear, very clever," he said, catching her by the shoulder. "But you don't make your escape in any such fashion as this!"

The grasp was like steel. The pain of it made Imogen wince. She struggled to twist herself free of it. But the man led her back to the fire, and deposited her ignominiously in the chair again.

"I have telephoned for the constable," he announced; "and you will not leave until he comes."

"The constable?"

"The constable. Why, my dear girl, do you expect to invade people's houses, rob them of their heirlooms and of even more valuable things—our ancestors were a poor lot—to eat their meat and drink their liquor until you are positively boozed—"

"Oh!" cried Imogen.

The impotent wrath that breathed in the long-drawn monosyllable made the man laugh.

"Good!" he cried. "You should go on the stage! Melodrama has lost something by your preference for burglary! I suppose you are indignant at my mentioning your condition? You object to profanity, you know! But what am

I to think? I come home—unexpectedly I admit, and most ill-bred it was of me—I come home to find a pretty little thief before my fire, sunk in a sleep from which nothing will rouse her for a while; and by her side is a tray, and on the tray an empty wine-bottle. Really, you haven't much of a head if that pint of claret did for you. But what you may have had before, of course, I can only guess."

"You unutterable—creature!"

Imogen had forgotten all about her lunacy theories now. Rage consumed her. If she could have killed the big, sardonic, smiling brute whose every word and look were insults, she would have done so joyously. Murder seemed a little thing to her.

There was something in the tense rage of her face, in the furious pride of her attitude, that gave the man pause. He hesitated in his speech. He looked at her, inquiringly. He put aside his pipe. He grew red and embarrassed.

"Tell me," he began, after a moment's pause, "tell me—" His voice wavered and broke. "If I have made any sort of a mistake," he said, despairingly, "you will never forgive me, never. Mistake? It isn't possible! Your reticule is stuffed full of poor grandmother's trinkets; and there's the bag of silver in the entryway."

Imogen grabbed the gray elephant-skin bag upon the table. It was open, and from it she shook into her lap a quaint assortment of old jewelry—queer, chased-gold brooches, strings of Roman beads, bits of Venetian silver, pins and rings picked out with rose diamonds, a ruby in a dingy setting, some coral earrings. And, seeing these things, she raised piteous, bewildered eyes to her jailer's face. She tried to speak. But her lips shook and she could say nothing. At her horrified, amazed look, a change came over his expression.

"Didn't you—really?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"And now," she said, "perhaps you'll let me explain who I am and why I am here."

The man looked long at her, dis-

trust, embarrassment and a sort of admiration struggling together in his face.

"Go on," he said, finally, "Of course, you may be merely devilish clever—but it can't do any harm to listen. No, by Jove, I don't believe it! I don't believe—anything but what you tell me!"

The haughty Miss Faring had never expected to receive a tribute to her mere honesty with such abject gratitude.

"Oh, thank you for that," she cried, her eyes luminous through sudden tears.

Then she began her story.

"Wait a minute," interrupted the man, when she had reached that point in her narrative where she was admitted to the house. "Looked like an anemic professor out of a job, didn't he?"

Imogen smiled and nodded.

"Um—talked with a repressed German accent and in the most Johnsonian terms?"

"Yes! Do you know who he is?"

"Rather! He was one of mother's pets. A needy count or baron or something she picked up in her town charities. She thought him so uncommonly noble to be willing to act as butler in a simple suburban household while he waited for remittances! That's how he learned the lay of the land and knew the dearth of servants to-night and the unprotected state of the houses. He resigned from the butlership last month because of 'overtures toward a reconciliation from his honored parents'! I told mother he was a humbug, all along. By Jove, he must have been annoyed to hear me striding up the path before he got through with the job. I had walked over to the club for dinner. Of course, he thought I had joined the town brigade—probably saw me put mother on the train. But—to think of your being in his power here! I wonder why he let you in? May have thought you had a right to force an entrance, and that it would be easier to cook up a plausible excuse for being here him-

self, if he let you in, than if you—tried the pantry entrance, for instance—and discovered him. But—how was it you slept so soundly, I wonder?"

He lifted the wine-glass and studied a faint sediment in the bottom. He sniffed suspiciously at the bottle. His face darkened.

"Drugged it!" he exclaimed. "Dastardly trick! Miss Faring, what shall I say to you about the indignities, the outrages, you have suffered in this house? And I—"

The hopeless humility of his attitude, the blank despair of his look, moved Imogen to a dim smile, although she was shaking with a realization of the dangers past.

"Please don't bother with apologies," she begged. "What could you have thought but what you did?"

"I might have used my eyes," he answered, with self-loathing. "I might have looked at you! And if I had—"

Imogen blushed.

"And don't bother with compliments, if you please," she said. "They seem—belated and a little meaningless."

Mr. Leech started a vigorous protest or apology, but it was cut short. A mighty tramping sounded on the piazza, a peremptory ringing of the door-bell followed, and, in another minute, the constable, ruddy, elate, blustered in with a prisoner in tow.

"Evenin', Mr. Leech," he bellowed, jovially. "Guess we've got your man here. Tell you how it was. I was out in Perkins's woods, doin' suthin' in the way of lookin' for that coon the Smead boys say is in them, an' my boy Jim he comes along, beatin' me up. He was out with me the other night, so he knows about where to look for me, an' he says you're a-telephonin' for me to come an' git a thief you've got in your place. Well, I makes tracks for the village, but all of a sudden I see suthin' skulkin' in the shadders an' the bushes. An' havin' my gun, I gives chase, an' I gets him—an' he turns out to be that French markee that worked for you last Summer, takin' French leave of us,

by gum, with a bag of loot from your place! Leastways, it's got your marks on it. Now where's the other fellow?"

"Jim misunderstood me," declared Austen Leech, suavely. "I didn't say I had a robber here, Gilson. I said there had been a robbery here. How are you, Von Blitter?"

Von Blitter turned a cold eye of dislike toward his late employer, and declined to commit himself on the subject of his health. Then, shifting his gaze about the room, he spied Imogen.

"Sleep well?" he inquired, flippantly.

He made instant acquaintance with the force of Austen Leech's right hand.

"Another word from you, and you'll go to the hospital for repairs before you go to jail!" declared the young man.

Then, while Gilson's prowess was being suitably recognized at the sideboard, there came the tap of light steps, the flurry of skirts, the panting of an agitated and breathless young woman. Polly Whitford precipitated herself into the hall, with her shame-faced husband bringing up the rear.

"Imogen, Imogen," she wailed, hurling herself upon her friend. "Imogen, can you ever forgive me? I've had that telephone-boy fired! Can you—you can't ever forgive me?"

Austen Leech waited to hear Imogen's answer with the look of one who had a vital interest in her pardoning capacity. She smiled at him above Polly's curls and embraces.

"Forgive you? I have the most exciting evening of my life to thank you for—and it had some pleasant features!"

#### EPILOGUE

From the Toledo *Chronicle* of February the nineteenth:

A wedding in which Toledo society is much concerned took place at St. George's church, Hanover Square, London, yesterday, when Miss Imogen Faring, daughter of the late General and Mrs. George Faring, of this city, was married to Mr. Austen Leech, of New York. The bride's cousin, Mr. Harold Faring, of the American consulate at Berlin, gave her away. Mr. Leech met Miss Faring on the steamer on which she sailed last November, and yesterday's wedding was the result of the acquaintance there begun. Among those present were—

# LA VEUVE

Par Jean Reibrach

**J**E DOIS vous avouer, déclara Mme Dorchal, que la jeune veuve dont je vous ai parlé est mère d'une petite fille.

— Mon Dieu! accepta Revel, puisque j'ai moi-même deux enfants...

Un sourire éclaira dans la pénombre du salon le joli visage aux cheveux blonds de Mme Dorchal:

— Voici donc, dit-elle, une difficulté de levée. Il ne reste plus qu'un point, mais celui-là vous concerne personnellement, et c'est précisément pour le fixer que je vous ai prié de venir.

Et, Revel s'étant incliné:

— Il s'agit, reprit Mme Dorchal, de votre divorce. Le jugement vous a été favorable, puisqu'il vous a laissé la garde des enfants. Mais encore, voudrait-on savoir... dans quelles circonstances... Il a fallu, n'est-ce pas? des motifs graves?

— Graves, sans doute, répondit Revel; mais peut-être pas au sens où vous l'entendez. L'histoire, du reste, tient en deux mots: Ma femme aimait un autre homme. Elle m'a fait l'aveu loyal de cet amour et m'a demandé sa liberté. Je la lui ai accordée.

— Simplement? s'étonna Mme Dorchal. Vous ne l'aimiez pas, alors?

— Je l'aimais! dit Revel.

Puis, le geste las:

— Qu'aurais-je pu faire, alors que les enfants eux-mêmes ne la retenaient point? Elle se serait enfuie ou elle m'aurait trompé! Qui sait à quelles aventures nous serions allés? Non, il vaut mieux que les choses se soient passées ainsi. Elle m'a fourni le prétexte d'une injure grave en refusant, après son départ, de réintégrer le domi-

cile conjugal. Cela a suffi pour le divorce.

— Et depuis?... s'informa Mme Dorchal.

— Depuis, je ne l'ai pas revue. J'ai su seulement qu'elle avait épousé celui qu'elle aimait...

Une tristesse avait nuancé, malgré lui, la voix de Revel.

— Je vous demande pardon, dit Mme Dorchal, d'avoir ravivé des souvenirs douloureux. Mais votre conduite fut celle d'un sage.

Revel s'inclina de nouveau. Mme Dorchal reprit alors gaiement:

— Il n'y a donc aucun obstacle à mon projet.

Et, tout à coup:

— Je vous ai parlé, tout à l'heure, d'une petite fille. Je ne puis encore vous présenter la mère. Mais voulez-vous voir l'enfant? Son institutrice, justement, l'a conduite aujourd'hui chez moi. Vous verrez, elle est ravissante.

Revel acquiesça distrairement. Les souvenirs évoqués se prolongeaient en lui douloureusement. Quel coup terrible, ce jour-là, quand, après trois années d'un bonheur, hélas! illusoire, il avait dû prendre l'héroïque résolution de s'incliner devant l'amour de sa femme, pour un autre! Et le rude calvaire du divorce, ensuite, son vain effort, plus tard, pour mettre entre cette femme et lui d'autres femmes, sans pouvoir s'y résoudre, avec une peur de ne savoir que sangloter sur leur poitrine! Et maintenant encore, s'il cherchait un nouveau mariage, n'était-ce pas, en même temps que par un besoin de revivre, à quarante ans,

pour abolir aussi le souvenir, pour oublier enfin celle qui, malgré tout, après six années écoulées, qui restait inoubliable? Ah! Marthe! Où était-elle, maintenant? Sans doute, elle aimait, était aimée. D'autres enfants étaient venus la consoler des premiers! Et pourtant, qui savait? Des déceptions aussi, peut-être...

La songerie de Revel fut interrompue. La petite fille entrait; et, déjà, il souriait, lorsqu'il tressaillit brusquement. Derrière l'enfant, l'institutrice qui la guidait avait paru une seconde: une silhouette élégante, un visage grave, dont les yeux ne s'étaient pas levés.

La porte était retombée. Revel demeurait immobile, un peu pâle.

— Qu'avez-vous? demanda Mme Dorchal.

— Je vous demande pardon! répondit-il avec effort, cette personne... qui vient de...

— L'institutrice? demanda Mme Dorchal. Mme Marthe? Eh bien?

— Marthe! répéta Revel.

L'éclair d'une émotion passa dans les yeux de Mme Dorchal, à son tour. Vivement elle demanda:

— C'est elle?

— C'est elle! laissa tomber Revel, bouleversé.

— Laisse-nous, mon enfant, dit Mme Dorchal à la petite fille. Je te rappellerai tout à l'heure!

Il y eut un silence. La main de Revel avait cherché l'appui d'un meuble. Il s'écria:

— Elle! elle!... Tombée là!...

Puis, avec une agitation soudaine:

— Je vous en prie, vous savez, sans doute...

— J'ignore tout d'elle, répondit Mme Dorchal; mais je me renseignerai si vous le désirez!

— Oh! oui. Il faut que je sache!

Mme Dorchal, pensive, regardait Revel profondément:

— Vous l'aimez donc toujours? demanda-t-elle.

Sans répondre, il ouvrit les bras, d'un grand geste lâche:

— Je vous en prie, elle vous dira, sans doute... Demandez-lui...

Mais Mme Dorchal, avec un sourire singulier:

— Je vais, dit-elle, la prier de venir vous parler.

Revel avait reculé au fond du salon, jusqu'aux fenêtres. Les yeux sur la porte, il s'efforçait de contenir le tumulte de son cœur. Viendrait-elle? Et qu'allait-il apprendre?

Des minutes coulèrent. Puis la porte fut rouverte. Le cœur de Revel s'arrêta, ses paupières battirent. Marthe était devant lui. Le salon s'étendait entre eux comme un désert. Elle était debout, immobile, les yeux baissés, le visage pâli de souffrance, voilé de tristesse. Les paroles cérémonieuses que cherchait Revel s'envolèrent. Il jeta, d'un souffle:

— Vous! vous, institutrice!...

Le front de la jeune femme s'inclina encore; les mains, se levant, cachèrent le visage. Il ne vit plus, au-dessus des doigts frêles, que les cheveux châtais où la lumière mettait un reflet de bronze. Une minute, le silence palpita. Le passé, comme un flot trouble, envahissait le cœur de l'homme. Il fit un pas vers elle et, la voix grave, un peu tremblante:

— Alors, vous n'avez pas rencontré le bonheur?

Un sanglot muet souleva les épaules de Marthe.

Revel s'approcha encore, fut au milieu du salon:

— Ce rêve, reprit-il, auquel vous avez tout sacrifié?...

Marthe eut un hochement de tête douloureux, et, la voix sourde:

— Ah! soupire-t-elle, vous avez été bien vengé!

— Vengé! dit Revel avec tristesse; je n'ai jamais désiré l'être! J'espérais, au contraire, que ce bonheur que je n'avais pas su vous donner...

— Le bonheur, interrompit Marthe, je ne l'espérais déjà plus lorsque je vous ai quitté. Je laissais trop de mal derrière moi!

Revel fit quelques pas encore. Il vit qu'elle pleurait. Une pitié l'étreignit. La conscience d'être celui à qui la vie donna raison, de se retrouver au bout du chemin, grandi et

fort devant elle, faible et vaincue, tourmentait son cœur d'un besoin de bonté, de pardon, de consolation. Et quelle souffrance il sentait en elle! Souffrance de sa désillusion, remords de ses enfants abandonnés, remords, peut-être aussi, du mal qu'elle lui avait fait à lui-même! Et lui aussi éprouvait une douleur affreuse. Il souffrait pour elle, il souffrait à cause de ses enfants dont il voyait la mère si misérable, et un remords, en même temps, l'inquiétait tout à coup. Qui savait s'il n'aurait pas dû, autrefois, la défendre contre elle-même, la retenir, la garder? Qui savait ce qu'il y avait eu de naïveté puérile dans la folie de Marthe; ce qu'il y avait eu, au contraire, de sottise ou d'orgueil au fond de la résolution stoïque par laquelle il avait consenti la rupture de leur vie?

Une révolte, cependant, s'éveillait en lui, à la pensée de l'autre qui la lui avait prise, qui l'avait séduite et leurrée, qui l'avait fait souffrir, elle, pour qui, jadis, il avait fait de si beaux rêves! Il demanda:

— Ainsi, votre mari vous a ruinée?

Elle fit oui, de la tête.

— Abandonnée, peut-être?

— Il est mort! répondit Marthe.

Ses bras, comme lasses, retombèrent, découvrant son visage. Elle ne pleurait plus, immobile et tragique comme la douleur même. Et Revel, maintenant, se taisait, bouleversé. La voix de Marthe avait jeté sur le mort comme un voile de pardon, presque d'oubli. Le passé, tout à coup, sembla emporté avec lui. Une émotion nouvelle l'agita. Des souvenirs lointains s'évoquaient en présence du visage douloureux, des traits inoubliables. Il se rappela les années anciennes, les premiers mois de leur mariage. Les tendresses d'autrefois frissonnèrent en lui; elles gonflèrent son cœur, et, d'un petit flot, montèrent jusqu'à ses lèvres.

Il fit un pas encore, fut près d'elle:

— Marthe! dit-il.

Puis, tandis que la douceur de cette appellation vibrait encore autour d'eux:

— Marthe, reprit-il, voulez-vous me

permettre de vous parler de moi à mon tour, de vous faire un aveu? J'étais venu ici dans l'intention de me remarier. Mme Dorchal...

— Je souhaite ardemment, dit Marthe, que vous soyez heureux!

Mais Revel, hochant la tête à son tour:

— Heureux! Puis-je l'être, à présent que je sais votre peine?

Une détresse sonna dans la voix de Marthe:

— Ah! pourquoi me parlez-vous ainsi? J'aimerais mieux que vous me maudissiez. Mes remords seraient moins cruels!

— Vos remords, Marthe? Mais si, au contraire, il était un moyen de les atténuer, de les abolir?

— Oh! quel qu'il soit, dites! Je le veux! s'écria Marthe. S'il est un moyen de réparer ma folie, parlez! J'obéirai!

Ses yeux, cette fois, s'étaient levés, douloureux, résolus; leur choc émut violemment le cœur de Revel. Mais, se dominant:

— Ce moyen, dit-il avec douceur, serait de reprendre votre place auprès de ceux que vous avez quittés!

Et comme Marthe, n'osant comprendre, attendait, les paupières battant d'angoisse:

— Marthe, le passé n'est plus, continua Revel. Nous sommes libres l'un et l'autre. Votre second mariage ayant été rompu, non par un divorce, mais par la mort, la loi nous permettrait, si vous y consentiez, une nouvelle union.

Marthe jeta un cri:

— Ah! Pierre! Pierre!

Elle laissa aller sa tête sur l'épaule de Revel. Elle pleurait maintenant éperdument. Lui penchait sur le visage de Marthe un sourire qui trembla. A cette minute, il sentait toute sa faiblesse de femme, il comprenait la double erreur du passé. Elle avait cédé au mirage des illusions, était allée vers ce qu'elle croyait l'amour, comme le papillon vers la lumière! Ah! oui, pourquoi ne l'avait-il pas gardée? Mais une douceur croissante le pénétrait. Un parfum ressouvenu mon-

tait jusqu'à lui, dans la buée tiède des larmes. Les minutes heureuses d'autrefois battirent dans son cœur. Sa voix se fit toute basse, un souffle seulement:

— Marthe, je vous aime toujours!  
Un frisson passa.

— Oh! moi, répondit Marthe, c'est vous que j'ai toujours aimé!

Et, la tête retombée contre l'épaule de Revel, elle ne bougea plus, blottie là, avec un rire aux lèvres et des regards de rêve.

Un bruit les éveilla.

— Ah! pardon! fit Mme Dorchal qui, un peu malicieusement, peut-être, venait d'ouvrir la porte, je n'entendais plus rien, j'avais cru...

Elle se retirait; mais Revel:

— Entrez, madame, au contraire, je vous en prie!

Et, conduisant Marthe par la main:

— M'excuserez-vous, madame, si vos soins ont obtenu un résultat si imprévu? J'ai l'honneur de vous présenter ma fiancée!

— Votre femme! dit avec un sourire attendri Mme Dorchal.

Elle tendit à Marthe les deux mains:

— Je cherchais à faire deux heureux, dit-elle. Je vois que, sans le vouloir, j'ai réussi au delà de mes espérances!

— En effet, dit Revel, car il y a d'autres heureux encore!

— Nos enfants! s'écria Marthe.

Et Revel souriant:

— Ils sont à la maison. Voulez-vous que nous allions les voir?



## A SONG-WRAITH

WHAT art thou that, nightly roaming,  
Haunted all my sleep?  
Like the soul of song and laughter,  
Like an echo following after,  
Through the midnight deep,  
Weary wraith that knows no homing,  
None to watch or keep.

Cold and unreal, as the seeming  
Of a false delight;  
Soul of that which died in singing,  
Upward through the darkness springing,  
Like a bird in flight;  
Like a bird that, vaguely dreaming,  
Warbles in the night.

Weary song, and soul as weary,  
Wandering unblest,  
Is there, then, for thee no shriving,  
Then for thee no safe arriving,  
From thy homeless quest?—  
Thou, that in the midnight dreary  
Darkly seekest rest!

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH WELLS.

# CHANTREY'S LAST THROW

By Constance Morris

**A** MAN with clear-cut, resolute features and an unmistakable air of good breeding arose as Chantrey entered.

"I had about given up hope of you," he said, with an air of indifference at variance with his words.

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting," Chantrey replied, sulkily, pulling off his gloves; "I was detained—unavoidably."

It was in one of the broad oak-paneled rooms of the English Club in Constantinople; the hour near midnight. At many tables, play was in progress. Nevertheless, the entrance of the young English attaché had bred sensation. As he crossed the floor, cries of welcome greeted him, but, here and there, a sneer curled a lip, and derisive laughter echoed. His boyish face was deadly pale, his eyes ablaze with the fever of gaming, his whole bearing reckless.

"Private room, to-night, Chantrey?"

"No," doggedly, "this table will do."

In little more than three weeks, he had lost a fortune, and now, driven to last straits, desperation was dominant. The habitués of the club had watched covertly the play-duel between the Briton and the American millionaire, and had wondered with no little apprehension as to the dénouement. The two staked sums greater than was customary in the company about them, and to-night their wagers were rashly extravagant. As the play proceeded, the throng of watchers gradually increased, until the players were surrounded two and three deep. The game was *écarté*.

Chantrey's weak face grew more and

more pale. Still he played in silence. As, with trembling hands, he took from his pocket his last sum, the perspiration showed upon his forehead and his every movement betrayed his anxiety.

The pile at the American's elbow had grown into a sliding, swollen heap, but now, suddenly, fickle Fortune veered, and, for a while, Chantrey enjoyed her favor. A murmur of sympathy greeted his efforts; at least, he played bravely. His opponent's handsome, aristocratic face betrayed neither elation nor triumph, but more than once he looked keenly at the young attaché as if to gage his feelings or to learn whether the time had come for an experiment he meditated.

"Good luck," he cried at last: "you should force it. Suppose we try dice—it is quicker and more exciting."

A volley of exclamations and oaths followed the American's proposal, but Chantrey's gambler's heart seconded it. The room, a moment before full of high-pitched voices, became tensely silent.

The young man took up the box and, for the first time during his month of riotous playing, he hesitated. It could be seen that he had bitten his lip until it bled.

"After you," he muttered at last, withdrawing his hand.

"As you will," answered the American, carelessly. He shook the box, brought it down sharply on the table and raised it.

"So," he said, softly; "so." He had thrown the highest possible. "Twelve is the game."

Chantrey, who had staked his all,

took the box with a reckless laugh, and the bravest gamblers present drew in their breaths. He raised the box, and down on the rosewood came the ivory cubes.

"By God!" he cried.

He also had thrown the maximum.

His cheek flushed purple. With a player's superstition, he regarded this check to his opponent a presage of victory.

They threw again, and the Englishman won by two points, nine to seven.

"Chantrey!" One of the bystanders touched him on the shoulder. "The money is yours."

"Let it be," Chantrey responded, joyously. His eyes sparkled. Things would at last go his way.

The American pushed an equal amount into the centre of the table, while Chantrey this time threw, and with confidence.

"A deuce and an ace," he said, tremulously.

The American threw silently.

"A four and a two. Better late than never," and he laughed nervously, as he swept toward him the golden pile.

For a moment Chantrey sat staring, dumbly, at the table, his forehead against his palm. Then, rising on uncertain limbs, he muttered between clenched teeth:

"Would to God I had stayed away to-night!"

The words cost him the sympathy of his auditors. They moved away singly, by twos and in groups.

The American's face shone colorless in the light of the two great chandeliers; the Englishman's was a picture of despair.

"I have lost all, all! I have nothing else to stake," he murmured, with dry lips.

Suddenly the other, bending nearer, looked at him intently.

"Oh, yes, you have," he said, gravely.

"If I have, it's yours to play for," Chantrey cried, recklessly.

"Is that a bargain?" asked the victor, slowly. "Is it a bargain, I say?"

"Is what a bargain?" the young man queried, stung by something in the other's tone.

"That we play for something you possess—something that I—I care enough about to wager high for. If you win, you shall have all that has been staked for the past month, on both sides. Do you comprehend? I said on both sides. If you lose—well, you forfeit to me the thing you stake."

"But what thing, what thing?" Chantrey's voice broke shrilly on the air in bewilderment.

"Your wife," the American answered, bluntly. Then he leaned back and looked at the other man through half-closed lids.

Chantrey stared at him, stupidly.

"My wife—my wife! I do not understand. Of what use will she be?"

"That is my business," was the dry answer. "If you lose, she is there; and, if you win, she is still there. She is the stake and shall decide."

The young attaché's eyes were bloodshot. His brain was a maze, and he could hardly think coherently. He had known men to stake their all, even their honor, but their love—never. He had seen his money fall away day by day; and he had noted many of his wife's tender self-denials. The proposition came at an unfortunate moment—a moment when the excitement of the play had given way to depression. The temptation to accept—the thought that by a single cast he might recoup himself and set himself right with her—was too much for him.

"I accept," he said, slowly; and then again, vehemently, "I accept."

"So," said his opponent, with a flicker of triumph in his eyes. "But you observe in any case your wife has the choice, my friend."

Chantrey did not answer. The American made him a sign to throw, and the young man stood silently, guiltily, for one breathless moment, while the other waited with tortured nerves. Then, with the light of battle smoldering in his eyes, he swallowed

hard, and, with a hand that scarcely let the dice go, threw.

Seven.

The American took the box up carelessly in his white, virile hand and, without hesitancy, let the ivories fall on the table.

Eight.

The young man's eyes dilated in sudden terror, and the other waited for some cry of violence or reproach. It did not come. Chantrey stood as one stunned, his gaze fixed on the white cubes which had cost him so dearly. Finally, turning, he said, very calmly:

"I have lost!"

"So I see," answered the other, slowly.

"I have lost and—and I will pay. Come! But," he continued, turning to the elder man, violently, "don't speak to me—that's all, don't speak to me!"

Jumping into a *voiture*, they hurried to the stone house with the latticed door below the two gables. On this Chantrey knocked. In the momentary pause before it yielded, the American turned to him, and said, with a calmness that was assumed:

"If she is sleeping, don't awaken her."

"Damn you," retorted Chantrey, his voice shrill and uneven, "do you think I notice your considerations? I tell you I have played for my life and lost—and lost," and his voice cracked in his effort to keep down the lump that was trying to impede his speech.

Together, they entered. Some one in the farthest end of the dim room with the silver lamps had risen.

"Mrs. Chantrey," said the American, in a cool, even voice, "I dared not hope to meet a hostess at this late hour;" and he looked with calmly smiling eyes at the mobile, tender face before him.

She stood, in her silver-lilied dress, pure and brilliant among the shadows, with orange flowers at her waist. The dark fringe of her lashes cast soft shades on her delicate cheeks, and her finely-cut lips challenged a world to kiss their fugitive lines.

She made the American no reply, but, with growing alarm, she turned to Chantrey.

"What is it, Cecil?" she asked, divining in his utter dejection some new unhappiness. "What is it?"

Chilled, sobered and affrighted, he looked at her with sullen, gloomy eyes, and, with pallid lips, said:

"I am ruined. I have lost all, money, lands, Vauxingham itself, at play."

The woman threw back her head and drew in her breath sharply, once, twice; and each breath hurt the American as if he were flecked on the raw.

"God forgive you, Cecil," she said.

And so he stood before her, his motionless arms limp at his sides, the shamed blood making purple his cheeks, his chin on his breast, and confessed his treachery.

As the woman slowly comprehended, she looked from one to the other in a stupor. Then she crossed the room, swiftly, to the American.

"And you?" she whispered; "and you?" She looked him full in the eyes with the flame of passion in her face. "And you could wrong me so?" she added, with reproach.

"No, no, it is not true," he retorted, his voice for once a note higher than its ordinary calm. "I did it but to try him, and he—he accepted."

"It is not that," she answered, and in her tone were wretchedness and grief.

"As for him," and she turned with fine contempt to the gloomy figure of Chantrey, who had dropped into a chair, "as for him, he is not fit to live, he is not fit to die! But me, me!" and she beat her breasts with her hands; "am I so base a thing, that you can put me up for barter and sale?" And softly on the stillness of the room sounded her sobs, passionate, broken-hearted, then tremulous with caught-in breath.

"Beatrice!" The American's voice was grave and his eyes glowed with tenderness and adoration. She ceased to weep and looked at him, startled by the solemnity of his tone. "What will be demanded of you to-night will

only be demanded by your own conscience, by your own desires. You have always trusted me, now listen to me."

She watched him out of wondering eyes as he continued:

"For thirty-eight years I have lived, and, for the greater part of thirty-eight years I have been seeking throughout the world the woman who was made for me and whom a great God destined to be mine. In Naples, years ago, I thought I had found her, but the world did not deviate by a single line from its course. Then again, in Sumatra, I thought my search ended, but the four seasons did not invert their order on that account. Once, I thought I had found my love in America, but still the earth revolved and the stars shone, and I came to know, what I had fancied, love was but a counterfeit seen through the prism of desire.

"Then, one day," he went on, "I met you, and I thanked God that I had waited. One day, I meditated a theft, because I coveted a neighbor's wife, and I said to myself, 'The world calls her a wife, but she is not protected—she is insulted and humiliated every day of her life. Why should not I, who love her, make her happy? The most cruel of follies is the binding together of two lives—like two corpses—from which life has gone.'"

She turned and walked to the embrasured window. In the silence, the American could hear his heart beating.

"I am no expert at love-making. I only know great love has come to me, and therefore I say to you, before him"—and he pointed to the wretched figure of the younger man, limp in the chair—"before him who swore to protect you, but who has only brought misfortune upon you; who swore to guard you, but who has left you to temptations and dangers; who swore to love you, but who has not even been a faithful husband—"

"It is a lie! it is a lie!" cried Chantrey, hoarsely.

The American went on, quietly, gravely, looking only at the woman in

the shadows near the iron lattice of the unshuttered window:

"You know me, do you not? Have you ever heard of anything in my life that would be a reproach, a scandal or a dishonor? I say to you, all is fair in love and war, and, from the time I met you, I set myself a task, but through it all I played fair. Do you deny me the right to make the woman I love happy? Are you going to give the rest of your beautiful life to a man who this night could so cruelly and deliberately debase you—who has been weighed in the balance and found wanting? It is true, I also played, but for a great stake—for your love, for my future, for your happiness. And I can make you happy! Will you come to me, will you trust me? Will you stand for a few months the condemnation of your world until the time when you can be my wife?"

The silver lamps burned still lower; the silken curtains near the door were stirred by the cool breeze, and the silence was broken only by the woman's soft breathing.

"Will you come, I say? No woman shall know greater love. There will be no burden but shall be taken from your shoulders. I shall set you so high, no reproach will ever reach you, no pain ever destroy the serenity of your life. O thou woman of all the world!"

He walked to where she stood motionless and pointed out into the serene Oriental night.

"See, over there on the Bosphorus lies the yacht that will be our paradise. In the morning, when you awaken, your eyes shall look only on beautiful things, and at night they will close with only the thought that I love you."

He leaned low toward her in the dimness of the room and whispered, just above his breath, gently and quietly:

"With my soul and body, I love you!"

The woman stood and gazed at him with earnest gravity, long and resolutely. Over all the scene without hung the strange mystery of a great city at night. Far down the street, a belated traveler passed, the echo of his

tread mingling with the throb of her pulses. All trace of color had faded from her cheeks, and all grief and bitterness from her white face.

Her mind was busy with the months of solitude she had passed in that room; with the depression that little by little had sapped her strength and hope; with the slow decay of her love, and, finally, with this last great wrong. And that which was uppermost in her mind, which steeled her soul and justified the worst, was not the months of loneliness, of deprivation, not the slight of his disloyalty, but the intolerable thought that he could make of her, whom he had once loved, a commodity to be wagered!

For one mortal—one immortal minute, she faced the American, and then closed her lids as though in great pain. She caught her breath tremulously, turned, and with proud head erect came unhesitatingly into the centre of the room. From off her hand, she drew slowly a plain gold ring and placed it

on the table, silently, before the guilty, bowed figure in the chair. Then, with unfaltering steps and uplifted chin, she passed through the doorway.

The American stood, statue-like, breathless, listening. Her retreating footsteps halted at the stair, and, with strained hearing, he waited, while hope and fear played leap-frog in his brain. Instinctively, he knew that the instant of her choice had come. For her to ascend to her chamber meant to accept a future the misery of which was as certain as death; to pass out into the night through the latticed portal was to lay hold on the omnipotent, exquisite present, and all of its entailed happiness.

An eternity crowded itself into ten seconds, and then upon his ear fell the click of the latch. With hammering heart and bounding nerves he advanced from the shadow, and strode out into the passage.

Over the chill quiescence of the room hung the gloom of desolation.



### THE OLD MAN

ONCE he was young, and earth a star  
 That sang beneath his feet;  
 But that old time is dim and far,  
 Hardly his heaven holds a star—  
 Only dull worlds that slow repeat  
 The dull world underneath his feet.

How did it happen? No one knows,  
 And he knows least of all;  
 Slowly the lines of morn grew dim,  
 Suddenly Youth looked back on him,  
 Beneath his feet the leaves of Fall,  
 Crumbled a little. This was all.

FANNY KEMBLE JOHNSON.



A BEAUTIFUL woman is the only poem that never yearns to appear in print.

June 1904

## THIS BOOK FOR YOU

I LEAVE this book for you, O friend of mine,  
 To speak for me that day my lips are dumb;  
 A silent messenger I bid it come,  
 To gain the welcome I must needs resign.  
 I pray you on that night you miss me most,  
 That night when most you crave a word of me,  
 Beside your fire and once again my host,  
 Open this book and greet me silently,  
 And read the poem that the worn page shows  
 I loved the best, and linger on the line  
 I marked there, as to say, "Lo, once a rose  
 I closed here for your finding, that was mine."  
 And, otherwhere, I know that you will say,  
 "Perchance she smiled here," and your smile will break  
 Upon your lips for our old laughter's sake,  
 And I shall hear, though very far away.  
 And in your reading, if perchance you see  
 Upon one page the stain a tear might leave,  
 I doubt not our two hands may meet and cleave  
 Once more in their old bond of sympathy.  
 And in the mists of that dim borderland,  
 Beyond our 'wilder'd thought of time and space,  
 I think our souls a little while may stand,  
 And look a moment in each other's face.

MCCREA PICKERING.



## A PRECAUTION

MRS. VON BLUMER—Don't forget to ask the clergyman to bless the food, my dear.

VON BLUMER—Perhaps, with this new cook of ours, we'd better wait until the dinner is over.



DEPARTING VISITOR—Good-bye, little Ethel! You may be a grown young lady before you see me again.

CANDID LITTLE ETHEL—Yes, ma'am; I hope so.

# THE SNARES OF A SUBURBAN CUPID

By James French Dorrance

“**W**ELL, I’m the lucky one!” I cried, letting myself into Bachelors’ Paradise, the flat just east of the Avenue which five of us had occupied for a little short of three years. “I sure am.”

I had just returned from the suburb of Bronxville, where I had seconded at the marriage-mill of one Richard Albertson, a friend from childhood, and, until yesterday, my flat-mate. It made the fourth time this Winter that I’d been best man, and after every ceremony there was another spare room in Paradise.

With the passing of Dick, the whole flat fell to me, and I was to live there alone until our lease ran out in June—a matter of some five months. The place would be as lonely as a theatre on Sunday morning. It certainly was not on this account that I felt that luck was with me.

The rejoicing was over my escape from matrimony. Four out of five of us had fallen into the pit which knows no ending short of death or the divorce court. And I was the one who escaped! It was passing strange, too, that it had so come about. From childhood it had been predicted that I would marry young, and my four flat-mates were certain of it. It all seemed so settled that I never had the courage to protest against the fate.

The quartette that had gone, on the other hand, boasted often and loudly that no woman would ever lead them under the yoke. They knew when they were well off and bachelors they would remain to the end of the chap-

ter. All I can say is, that it was a mighty short chapter.

The more I thought over it that night of Dick’s passing, the more strange it all seemed. When four as solid, settled bachelors as one ever found in the same city directory rush one after the other into the benedick class, is it accident? Is it not, rather, a disease? The question required meditation.

I climbed out of my frock-suit into pajamas and a robe; hauled the most comfortable Morris chair before the fire; found a pipe that drew, a bottle that poured red liquor, a siphon that fizzed, a glass to be filled; and I was ready to grapple with the problem.

By way of beginning, I reminded myself that for two years we five had been as happy as men can be outside the happy hunting grounds or Bagdad. We had a good cook and a trembling janitor. We were too young to be crusty, and too old to scrap over trifles. We knew plenty of nice girls, and did the social act in moderation, clearing off our indebtednesses with a party twice a year. One could not have found a cloud on the ceiling of the flat with the biggest telescope they have up at Columbia, though I’m not so sure about cobwebs.

Then that insidious little villain, Cupid, crept into the circle, claiming Bobby Compton as his first victim. The happy-home-and-fireside mark was on him from the time he went to that boat-club dance on Staten Island. The girl lived a dreadful distance in the interior, too—whole miles from the ferry landing at St. George. Bobby

swore that he covered the entire Borough of Richmond in the three times he lost himself getting to and from her house.

Bluff old Goodhue was next, though what he ever saw in that little East Rockaway blonde is more than I can make out. And East Rockaway! Of all the places to get to or from or mixed up about, East Rockaway is the limit. Frank's wedding-party spread itself through seven different Rockaways along the Long Island shore, and half of the people were not in at the finish at all!

Third to go was John Paull, who had the excuse of a husky and unexpected inheritance for casting his lot with the best-looking girl in Yonkers. Dick and I stood by him to the end of a long church ceremony, and did our best to let every one in the town know how happy he was until the Albany express came to the rescue.

And you will remember that I had just come from the ending of Dick, who had shouldered the responsibility of a flyaway youngster of eighteen with a Bronxville bringing-up.

"It must be a disease," I was saying, confidentially, to the fire, when, suddenly, a Sherlock Holmes feeling crept over me and I had a clue. No, to be accurate, I had four clues.

"Staten Island, East Rockaway, Yonkers, Bronxville!" I confided to the fire.

Then I counted them off on my fingers—one should do that with clues—"Staten Island, East Rockaway, Yonkers, Bronxville."

It spelled nothing but "Suburbs."

"It is not an urban complaint," was my very evident deduction. "The Cupid-germ lurks in the suburbs."

A little reflection cleared the problem wonderfully. It explained why none of the four had fallen during the first two years. The girls they knew all lived in New York proper. It was not until the second Summer that they began to go into the suburbs.

It explained my escape—I knew no suburban damsels. It held out the

promise of future safety—stay among the triflers of Manhattan.

Still, I was not satisfied. I wanted to know how it was done—all the little secrets of the play, all the ins and outs of the suburban girl's game of hearts.

"Try original research," crackled the fire.

"On whom, I'd like to know?" I demanded.

"That New Jersey girl you meet at Cinderellas," was the answer from the hearth or somewhere.

Sure enough! I had forgotten her! I did know a girl in the suburbs. Straightway, I did a mock-trembling act.

She was a very good-looking girl, I remembered now, quite clearly. I found her name on a discarded dance-programme—Crete Carstans. We had met at several dances, and she had been a dream in the waltz. She gave me an opportunity when the Winter was nearly over, and I asked her if I might call.

"You won't want to when you know," she smiled back.

"Know what?" I demanded, suspecting nothing worse than news of her engagement to some other chap.

"Where I live," she continued.

"Where?" I asked, with less eagerness.

"In New Jersey," she answered, demurely.

"Not Hoboken?" I exclaimed.

"Nothing worse than Hackensack," she assured me; and that ended it, though once I went so far as to look up the time-table of the Hackensack and Somewhere Railroad, which, with a ferry-boat, connects the town in which she lived and the metropolis.

Now, how different! With the spirit of the investigator, the explorer, the original researcher, running high in my veins, Hackensack became a Mecca. It was just what I wanted. Going into the suburbs strictly as a student surely would not be dangerous. I would label every move as it was made, and put down each snare as carefully as the suburban Cupid set them for me. Up to the point of a proposal, I

would play into the hands of the enemy, but beyond and into the realm of the engaged, I would not go. Even the interest of science, I felt, did not excuse one who deliberately made and broke an engagement to marry. But, as far as the point of proposal, I would be a most eager student.

That Miss Carstans might not care to play with me, that I might not be considered eligible from a suburban matrimonial standpoint, never entered my head. For once, however, vanity and conceit did not lead to a fall. I wrote a most careful note and was given an evening the following week.

The day before the initial visit, I purchased a blank-book and, in my best hand, set down on the title-page the following inscription:

Original Research  
into the  
Snares of Suburban Cupids.

It really looked quite businesslike, and I cannot set forth the remainder of this narrative better than to quote you the notations which I made there from time to time.

*January 30.*

Hackensack is a town of eight, ten—I don't know how many thousand people. The twenty miles from New York seem a hundred before the train gets one there. There are two society streets, and the young woman lives on one of them. Her father is a lawyer who makes daily trips to his office on Nassau street, and her mother is at the head of the local chapter of the Sisters of Plymouth Rock—which, by the way, has nothing to do with the raising of chickens, as I first suspected.

Miss Carstans entertains in a most comfortable parlor and doesn't give a hang for the curtains—which allows one to smoke. Thank the Lord! The last train starts for town at 10.30 o'clock. If she had not warned me I should have missed it.

The worst of it is the long ride to town in an empty train and freezing ferry-boat. She is a pretty girl, though.

*February 6.*

It is surprising how soon one gets to know a person well—sometimes. We seemed like old, old friends tonight. I told her all about myself, even to family and prospects. Miss Crete's mother came in under the excuse of bringing us lemonade and cake. She is a good advertisement for the daughter—looks about thirty of her forty-five years, has figure and color and no wrinkles to speak of. Is there not an old warning, "Look well at the mother before you take the daughter"? The Carstanses need have no fear. The mother is the best move yet.

I have called for two years on that Riverside Drive girl and never had a glimpse of her mother. And I can't even imagine any member of Miss Madison Avenue's family bringing in lemonade and cake. Yet it seemed just the right thing in Hackensack. Miss Crete's beauty certainly grows on one.

*February 13.*

She allowed me to miss my train last night, and it is about as fit a snare as Cupid ever laid in or out of the suburbs. Yet it was all done so simply that it was a long time before I put the label on.

The first night I called we made the agreement that she was to tell me in time for the train. Last night she remembered at 10.33, when the locomotive whistled yard limits. There was no other train until six in the morning, and I had visions of the usual country-town hotel with its full line of horrors. But not so! Again the mother appeared, and her invitation to spend the night under their roof was so genuine one could not refuse. She worried a little over the time I had to be at the office in the morning, and was relieved when it appeared that I could go in on the same train with Father Carstans. I met the rest of the family at a sort of nightcap lunch, and then the father showed me into the most home-like quarters I've run across since I left Batavia.

I was surprised to see Crete at breakfast. She presided in her mother's stead, and poured the coffee for us. Really, she was beautiful. I have always said I would never marry a woman until I had seen her at breakfast.

Father Carstans is a jolly good fellow, even early in the morning. He is quite enthusiastic over living in the country, and thinks there is no place like Hackensack.

*February 20.*

Crete is in town this week visiting an aunt, and we have been twice to the theatre. She is better dressed than most city girls, yet, to-night, she confessed that the gown she wore had been made with her own hands. It was her mother's idea, she said—a little old-fashioned, but lots of fun after one learned how. It will be mighty comforting to the man she marries, to escape dressmakers' bills. She grows more beautiful every day, and it is the sort of beauty that one never tires of.

*February 27.*

To-night we went to call on friends of Crete's, who have just been married. They have a little house all to themselves, and it is the coziest proposition I can remember. The fellow only draws half as much salary as I do. It must be very satisfying to have a place all your own that way.

By the way, this is the most likely snare yet developed. Of course, I don't believe for a moment that Crete had any idea of the effect it would have on me. She is not that sort.

Miss Riverside Drive took me to see a new home once. It was a grand apartment and furnished like the Prince Henry suite at the Waldorf. The annual rent was nearly as much as the whole Hackensack outfit cost. I came away convinced that marriage was a luxury that James could not enjoy, even if he desired it with his whole soul. It is comfortable to know that you can have a thing like this if you want it, and I've been blessing the Hackensack revelation.

*March 9.*

For some time Mrs. Carstans has been possessed of the fear that I was lonely on Sundays, so I spent yesterday in Hackensack. I went out Saturday night to a little dance at the club-house. Friendly place, that club-house, and a jolly good crowd. It does not cost a fortune to belong, and if your great-great-great-grandfather did not come over when ours did, why, nothing is said about it.

I never noticed before the effect religion has on the beauty of women who are really devout. Crete is devout at prayers, and a light comes into her eyes that is heavenly. She is the most beautiful woman in the whole wide world, and none is better.

*March 11.*

Mr. Carstans took dinner with me at the club to-night. We spent a pleasant evening living over the college days, though his ended twenty-five years before mine began. He told me of a prize bargain in suburban real estate. Says it is the best investment in the home-property line that he has seen for an age. Come to think of it, this entry has nothing whatever to do with Cupid's snares.

*March 15.*

I went out to look at that property to-day. Crete went with me and thought it fine. It is a bargain, and I'll close for it to-morrow.

There seems to be nothing doing in the snare line lately. I've kept close watch. Master Cupid must be asleep.

Her brothers have taken to calling me Jim, but there is not a trace of flippancy about it.

I am sure every good American ought to be a landowner.

*March 20.*

We hit on a new amusement to-night—drawing plans for a house. I'm sure I should have been an architect, and Crete has more ideas than a designer of advertising. We built up the smartest little home on paper! I have the drawings in my pocket, and, just for fun, I'm going to get an esti-

mate on the cost of working them out.

In reading this over I detect some of the earmarks of a snare; but that can't be, for the drawing idea was all my own.

In some ways Crete reminds me of my mother.

*March 28.*

Crete was in the city to-day in search of ideas. Another of her friends is going to be married, and she asked Crete to help her select furniture. They took me along.

It doesn't cost so much, after all, to fit out a house, if you know where and how to buy. Of course, every chair does not have to be Empire or every table a signed mahogany. Really, some chaps have painted some very desirable things since the time of Velasquez and Millet.

What perfect taste Crete has! I believe she could furnish a Harlem flat so that it would be livable. And give her a whole house to do with as

she likes—well, paradise has but one advantage—eternity.

*March 29.*

I've been thinking it over, and this is the end. I'm off for Hackensack to ask the finest woman that ever breathed to honor me as never man was honored before. Perhaps that is putting it a little strong, but it expresses my feelings. If she says yes, we'll build on that lot I bought, and her friend can't have a single one of the furnishing ideas.

*Snares?*

There has not been a single snare! She wouldn't set a snare for the finest man in the world, to say nothing of only me.

Did I think I was lucky in escaping? Well, I've been a fool! I begrudge the four who went before, every minute of the start they have.

Lucky one? I'll be the lucky one if Crete says yes.

*March 30.*

She said it.



## TOKENS

I CRUSH the faded roses into dust,  
 Then cast their fragrant ashes on the air,  
 A gift to secret winds that waft them where  
 No eyes may mark fulfilment of the trust;  
 I hold the violets a moment, just  
 To live once more the hour when they were fair;  
 The yellowed letters lie beside them there,  
 So sweet I cannot burn them—as I must!

Yet, after all, I count the tokens naught,  
 Since in thy heart the roses grow for me,  
 And every violet brings me the whole  
 Of thy great tenderness and loving thought—  
 Like some illumined missal, words from thee  
 Are lettered on the pages of my soul.

MYRTLE REED.

## PROSE AND POETRY

MY life had been but halting prose  
 Throughout the blossom-time,  
 While birds sang lyrics to the rose,  
 And every breeze that crossed the close  
 Hymned golden Summer's prime!

While all the world went lilting past  
 To cadenced chord and chime,  
 And hopes were high and pulses fast,  
 My metre lagged—until, at last,  
 Love came and brought the rhyme.

ELISABETH R. FINLEY.



## THE TRAINED NURSE

WHEN I was sick I had a trained nurse. She came in the still watches of one evening, and laid her soft, cool, twenty-five-dollar-a-week hand on my burning pauper brow, and thenceforth her salary and my fever ran on together, not even stopping for meals—that is to say, the nurse herself stopped for meals, but not her salary. About noon each day, when the glad outside world was caroling to the sky, when the merry school-boy was skipping homeward, and the flowers were dancing in the sunlight, she would part from me with tears in her eyes and a choking sensation in her throat and a look of keen agony, and slope gently down-stairs, and spend a few hours over the family board, while the cook threatened to leave, and the hot-water bottle on my jaded stomach became frappée.

She came to me with a complete set of books, a clinical thermometer, and the story of her past life. When she had taken away my temperature, and gone off with it to some far corner of the room, and examined it critically by the light of a tallow-dip, and set it down in Ledger B, where I couldn't see it, she picked up her trusty pad, and began to write a historical novel, of which I was the unhappy hero. From that moment, I felt that about me there was nothing sacred.

The second day after she came, when all the towels had been used up, and all my ingenious children were paving the back yard with remnants of dry toast, and the doctor had told her all about me that she hadn't been able to find out herself, she began to relate to me the story of her past. Two weeks later, the crises in her story and my fever were both passed. We both survived; but, at this late day, I have an idea that her story is even now the more robust of the two.

The trained nurse is now a necessity in every modern home. As an antidote to medical science, she has no equal. Dressed in rich, but not too gaudy, bed-ticking, and armed with medals she won in the Crimean War for reading *Punch* aloud to the sick soldiers, she stands over one's bedside like a guardian angel, and no germ can pass the lines without giving the countersign.

TOM MASSON.

## THE CORROSIVE HOUR

By Gertrude Lynch

**T**HREE were five red-carpeted steps from the hall to the reception-room. Mrs. Green, stout, brunette and fifty, had a separate exclamation for each.

"You have made the same mistake before!"

"She will capture him just as she did Frank Arlington, Will Evans and a score of others!"

"I admire bravery, but recklessness is a different thing!"

"You are never sure of a man, even at the altar; not until you reach the front door of the church—going out!"

"If she succeeds, you have nobody to blame but yourself!"

These remarks were thrown like arrows over her shoulders, which, notwithstanding her age, were firm, white and beautifully molded. It was a favorite saying of Mrs. Green that shoulders and epigrams were the last attractions to leave a woman.

Mary Felton met the verbal weapons as she might have faced poisoned shafts, did duty demand.

There was a proud poise to her head, and her eyes were as fearless as those of a young fawn which has never known any life but that of the pleasure. They were large, candid and brown. They looked you in the face, and seemed to challenge you to show your soul as she showed her own.

They performed that office now, and Mrs. Green felt a little uncomfortable. For many years she had compromised with the world, but she had not forgotten that there was a time when she had been as contemptuous of the shams and insincerities as was the girl who followed in her wake.

When they reached the reception-

room they sat side by side on a divan, and the older woman continued her remarks.

"I know, my dear, what you are going to say before you open your lips. You have said it a thousand times, if not in words, in gestures, in silence. The most difficult lesson in life is that of concession, but we all have to learn it and practise it, until at last we forget that we ever had any decision or ideals—I know, I know!"

She was depressed for a moment, and then, shaking herself free from the mood, as was her wont—"You have fully made up your mind to ask her? The invitation is not sent. Think what you are doing. She is a very attractive girl, and, like all men, he is susceptible to flattery and beauty—her strongest weapons."

The long, slender fingers of Mary Felton, dallying with the note of invitation, trembled slightly.

"I will not compromise with what I think is right. It is not daring, it is principle. I will have no man's affection unless it is given to me, freely, after due test of other women's charms. I will have no relation that is based upon a fear."

"And you will bring these two together, knowing that the chances are that she will exert her utmost power to fascinate him—for a time."

"Forever—if for a time."

"You mean that, too?"

Again the proud head was raised and again the syllables, full, resonant, sounded like the warning of a silver bell.

"If he leaves me for her, it is irrevocable."

"You cannot forgive?"

"It is not forgiveness; it is temperament. I can no more change than I can the color of my eyes."

"Temperaments are flexible; we can bend them to our will."

"They are flexible, as elastic is, which returns to its original form as soon as pressure is removed. One cannot spend one's life in an artificial position, pulling one's temperament this way and that, to suit occasion. I cannot play the patient Griseida; I cannot wait for the returns of a man who is so weak that a new gown, a clever word, a classic profile, can allure him from his allegiance. What is friendship, love, without perfect loyalty—nothing, less than nothing, shifting elements, having neither value nor foundation. I could easily forgive, but I could not trust myself in the power of a feeling which is like a will-o'-the-wisp. No, if Chandler Ellsworth falls a victim to Inez's blandishments, he stays where he falls."

"You are hard."

The girl thought a moment. "I suppose it sounds so; words are cruel things. I know myself, that is all—and knowledge always has its profile turned to the world. There is nothing soft or alluring about it."

Mrs. Green sighed.

Mary Felton continued: "Supposing I married him. Can you imagine me the sort of girl who excludes all attractive women from her friendship for fear of her husband; who surrounds herself with the plain, stupid, resistible; who is never happy when he is out of her sight, unless she can account for his time; who, in public, keeps one eye open for possible entanglements? Impossible as that would be for me, how many women we both know who live that life! No, a thousand times, no. I would rather die than compromise myself to that extent. And, when one begins to compromise, where is one to end?"

Mrs. Green blushed under her thin coat of rouge.

Until her husband's death, she had practically lived the existence that Mary Felton described. She had been

the unattractive wife of an attractive man, one who was vain of his power among women, and who had never allowed it to become exhausted from disuse. It was in seeking happiness out of such conditions that she had learned the lesson of compromise, which she was now striving to inculcate into the mind of the younger woman.

While she sat, lost in the thoughts that these unconscious words evoked, Mary Felton rose and touched the bell. On the appearance of the maid, she handed her the note, and then turned to her companion with a smile.

"It is too late now to argue; the die is cast. Possibly fate ordained that I should exist solely for the purpose of bringing these two together, who knows? There are less important reasons for incarnation, I am sure, than that. Come, smile!"

She approached the older woman, and placed her hands lovingly about her. "Don't, my dear friend. Don't worry. Let me play the game my own way, with my few cards, and by my few rules. It is all I can do. If I lose, I shall be a good gambler. I shall smile until the last."

"I can't jest. A sense of humor is all right until it makes one ineffective, then it is all wrong. To treat humorously some situations in life is to lessen one's dignity."

"And this is one?"

Mrs. Green did not answer directly. "I like Clifford Ellsworth. I should be happy if you married him."

"He has never asked me."

"But you have never given him the opportunity—why?"

"I could not, until he had seen Inez."

"Oh, youth! youth!"

"Listen. Inez Blair is my court of last appeal. If a man can pass that test, he is safe for all time. She is the most attractive, the most beautiful woman I have ever known. If I were a man, I should follow the procession of moths. She has taken all the arts and graces for her possessions, and she is without heart, which is ever a handicap. She has above all that mysterious charm which binds these qualities

into a Gordian knot of fascination. The vitality that other women diffuse in a thousand directions, she concentrates on one ambition—to attract every man whose path crosses her orbit; some time she will marry, when she finds one who interests her sufficiently, and supplements that interest with eligible qualities. Clifford Ellsworth may be that man—who can tell? I must give her the chance to find out. It is useless to argue with me; I must."

Then, as her companion said nothing: "Come, let us talk of something else. I am tired of the subject."

Mrs. Green answered, more quickly than usual:

"Willingly. I was tired of it before we commenced."

Mrs. Green detained Inez Blair as she was leaving the dressing-room, after having removed her wraps. In an opposite corner two girls were arranging their slippers, and were absorbed in a low-toned confidence as to the relative merits of Louis Quinze and Louis Seize.

"I am going home to-morrow. I am sorry to have missed you, when we exchanged calls."

"Not so sorry as I, dear Mrs. Green. I see you so seldom on our flying trips. That country home of yours must be very alluring."

"I love it. I have been a widow now fourteen years, but I cannot bring myself to the point of giving up the old place; still, if Mary should ever need me I would do so willingly."

"You don't think she will?"

"Her aunt can't live much longer; she has been bedridden for months." She paused a moment. "If I could only leave her in the care of a good man!"

"Good men are not numerous."

"There is one."

"Indeed? I have missed him!"

"There are plenty if you have the right touchstone."

"Or tombstone? The cemeteries, I understand, are filled with them. But this one, the living one—who is he?"

Mrs. Green looked around. The

two girls were reinforced by others. They were all busy with finishing touches, and no one's attention was caught by the tête-à-tête at the door.

"Clifford Ellsworth. You know him?"

"I have never even heard of him. I have been away, you know. He is a new star. Is he handsome, virtuous, rich and charming? He must be or you would not want him for Mary."

"He is all these."

"And I am to meet this paragon to-night?"

Mrs. Green's tone became less conventional, more serious. "Yes, Inez, you are to meet him to-night. It is the dearest wish of my heart that he marry Mary, and she, I think, cares for him—or will."

Soul to soul they stood. The older woman had taken a chance. She had thrown the plummet into this girl's nature that was like a shallow pond which has unexpected depths.

"You want her anchored? It is a great thing to be anchored in the shifting sands."

"She must be. She will be alone in a few months—if not before, and the world is a cruel place for a lonely woman."

"And all women are lonely. We will help her—you and I."

The beautiful girl bent her head a moment, and their lips met. There were tears in the pretty eyes when they were raised.

"If I had a friend like you—who knows!"

She turned away, and, after a moment, left the room, Mrs. Green joining the group at the cheval-glass, so that their entrance together might not excite Mary Felton's suspicions.

The evening would have been as banal as most of its kind had it not been for its undercurrent of conflicting emotions.

Clifford Ellsworth did not arrive until late. When he came into the room, his eye was caught by the foreground picture. It was charming enough to have attracted one less susceptible to the beautiful than himself.

Near him sat Inez Blair. She was in a rose-tinted gown, and seemed dainty and colorful as a flower. About her were grouped half-a-dozen men; one sat at her feet with his arms crossed about his knees and his eyes turned in a look of hopeless adoration; another was bending over her shoulders, whispering low-toned flatteries, and gazing in the intervals at her perfect profile; facing her stood a trio with arms interlocked, making serio-comic remarks concerning each other's attempts to engross her attention. In other parts of the room were men, who, though constant in seeming, were renegades in spirit—looked furtively past their companions to the centre group, wondering as to the cause of the constant laughter, envying their more fortunate fellows the advantage of place.

Inez Blair had the peculiar faculty of stimulating men while she acted as an anesthetic to women. As a tropically beautiful woman may, at her entrance, make others of her sex, who until that moment have enjoyed a brief triumph, seem less attractive than they are in reality, so, in the irrepressible flow of her small talk, her subtle flatteries, her quick repartee, inexhaustible fund of anecdote, supplemented by tact and physical attraction, Inez Blair was as a moon in a starlit sky, paling the lesser lights into insignificance.

Mary Felton rose to meet Clifford Ellsworth, and they chatted together a moment. She was depressed by the violence of her emotion; a crucial moment in her life was at hand, and she could not free herself from the shadow of its approach. He responded, unconsciously, to her mood, and they stood, half-embarrassed, half-resentful of the change in each other, neither reading the riddle completely.

Laughter from the centre group aroused them. Clifford Ellsworth looked quickly over his shoulder. There was a musical cadence in the girl's tone, which made his heart beat a little faster; then he turned to his hostess.

"You have a jolly little party."

Anything did to explain his unconscious gesture.

"It is always gay where Miss Blair is. You must meet her."

"Must I?" The word was conventional, not protesting.

"Yes, she is an old friend of school-day time. We haven't seen much of each other of late, for she has been out of town, and I have been a slave to auntie. Come."

He followed obediently.

The group of men made way for them, and Mary introduced the two.

Inez's lips grew a little tense as their eyes met. He was a handsome man, and there was something in his glance which seemed to promise more than the twentieth-century Apollo usually does, mentally and magnetically. She already regretted her promise, but she intended to be true to her word.

She bowed in acknowledgment to his greeting, then turned to a man on her left to continue her interrupted conversation.

"You were going?"

Mary Felton was not to be diverted from her purpose. She waited until the anecdote and its laughter were finished, then said:

"Come, you have monopolized Miss Blair long enough; I want her to talk to Mr. Ellsworth." She made a graceful gesture, indicative of brushing them aside, as one would a group of moths from a brilliant flame. "Mr. King, you are to go and make your apologies to Mrs. Green for your neglect. You have not seen her since she was here last Winter. Mr. Bemis—" Exercising her privilege as hostess, she dismissed him in another direction, then turned to the trio, who stood protesting to the last. As they started to obey, Inez held out a detaining hand.

"I have allowed you to rob me of all, but Benjamin I will not lose. 'Benjamin, my youngest adorer, return.' I will talk to Mr. Ellsworth another time, but I must tell Benjamin something which is burning to be said."

Benjamin sank in a helpless heap at her feet, and, after a half-apologetic glance at Clifford Ellsworth, she turned

the full battery of her attractions upon the flaxen-haired youth.

Clifford Ellsworth was not a vain man, but even his normal amount of self-esteem was wounded. He had been attracted by the grace and beauty of Miss Blair, and the fact that every other man in the room found her fascinating enough to neglect the rest of her sex, if not openly, at least in spirit, made her seem no less charming. A man desires to lead in every other path in life except that which ends at a woman's shrine; there he is content to become one of a procession, and the longer the line which precedes him, the more devout his worship. Possibly, what is often called feminine vanity may be found to be merely a desire to provide Prince Charming with a suitable escort.

He took his dismissal without show of feeling, but with a certain wonder, so vague that it could hardly be qualified in any class. He stepped back and rejoined Mary Felton with a smile.

"Now that you have done your duty as hostess, that you have deliberately and vainly tried to get rid of me, perhaps you will be good."

His lips said little, his eyes everything. He did not leave her side again during the evening. One by one, the men who had been driven away from Miss Blair returned, reinforced from time to time by others, but he did not again look in her direction. His allegiance, momentarily wandering, had returned to Mary Felton, and before the evening was over, he had entirely forgotten that Inez Blair was present.

When they said good night, Mrs. Green put her firm arms about the girl's neck.

"I am an old woman, and I am more often wrong than right. Perhaps you did well, after all; you will not be anxious now. You see, there is absolutely no attraction on either side. I was watching. Everything is a matter of affinity—temperament. You could bring them together a thousand times and the result would be the same.

"I am going to-morrow; when I

return, I hope it will be to see you the wife of Clifford Ellsworth—that is my dearest hope. Do not disappoint me."

Mary Felton was not entirely satisfied with the experiment. It was possible, as Mrs. Green declared, that she might bring them together a thousand times, without altering their relation, but she doubted. She was too candid herself to be able to trace all the subtleties of other women's cleverness, so called. She knew that Inez had methods which she used in the manipulation of men's attentions and admirations. She did not consider that a past-mistress in the art of coquetry would not resort to such an overworked plan as indifference to gain her end. She believed that Inez's attitude was assumed as a preliminary to other tactics. She knew her well enough to be certain that she would allow no man of Clifford Ellsworth's abilities to remain blind to her power. In this creed she brought them together frequently, leaving them for tête-à-têtes, praising them one to the other. Pride, suspicion and doubt, the inseparable companions, were her teachers, and she was an apt pupil. She was not successful. Over and over again, she arranged her plans which were foiled by the permanent apathy of Inez Blair, which acted like an ice-cold bath on any enthusiasm which Clifford Ellsworth might have displayed in happier conditions. She did this delicately, and at last Mary Felton was convinced. There was no fault of the amateur in Inez's acting, no exaggeration, no forgetfulness. She deceived everybody but herself.

Clifford Ellsworth represented to Inez more than any man had for a half-decade, partly because he possessed the sum total of qualities which she had secretly selected for her ideal; partly because he was forbidden fruit, and it was not in her nature to deny herself. She stood her ground firmly. Her promise had been given, and although it had been drawn from her in a moment when she was off guard, it was no less a promise for that. In her easy creed of life, there was but one

standard of ethics. To her the broken word, the broken faith, was impossible. This was partly her inheritance, partly the teaching of a widowed father who had endeavored to inculcate in his only child the manly virtues as he understood them. Even in her many love-affairs, Inez was true to her standard, and no one of her adorers could claim that she had promised more than she had fulfilled.

For a long time, Mary Felton could not believe that her good fortune was real. She had feared so much from the test to which she had submitted Clifford Ellsworth. In her pride was a certain humility; in her jealousy an overweening modesty. She did not rate her own attractions at their proper value, rating her rival's too high. It was only after repeated failures, after meetings arranged with careful purpose, from which Clifford Ellsworth returned to her gladly, and from which Inez departed without backward look of regret, after half a hundred failures, that she dared breathe freely.

So Mrs. Green was right after all. She had not thrown them together a thousand times, but times enough to show that what her older friend had stated was true—there was apparently no affinity of temperament.

She could and would be herself again, throw off the slight veil of restraint which she had worn of late, face the future gladly. He had stood the supreme test of feminine attraction; no other woman he would ever meet and know could display such an equipment of allurement as Inez Blair.

It was during this transfiguration of sentiment that he said to Mary one night—they were standing alone in a secluded corner at a ball—"I am tired of wearing the curb bit."

"What do you mean," she asked, then her eyes fell.

"You know what I mean." His words were gentle but there was underlying strength. "I have waited patiently. I want my reward."

Mary's aunt with whom she had lived since she was orphaned, who had for years been a chaperon in spirit

rather than in letter, was now numbering her days. She refused to believe the unfailing symptom of her disease, and insisted upon Mary fulfilling her social duties. The news of the engagement seemed to bring her an aftermath of vitality, and, to the surprise of the physician, nurse and friends, she rallied in the warm Spring days, and spent her hours devising details of what she had determined should be the conventional wedding, bridesmaids, orange-blossoms and the rest. She viewed the engagement with satisfaction only equaled by that of Mrs. Green, who wrote voluminous letters of congratulation daily from her country home.

Mary humored her aunt to an extent, but she would not make her engagement public—to her she excused this on the ground that she wished to be happy a little while without espionage—to herself and her fiancé she admitted that she would not invite congratulation with death so near. Besides Mrs. Green, only one woman was taken into her confidence—Inez Blair. They had made promises in school days that each should know of the other's troth as soon as it was made. The days of the secret engagement were happy ones, filled with the joy which comes from love's security, rendered mysterious, spiritual, by the shadow encompassing them. Death, so near, seemed to whisper of love's incompleteness, love of life's immortality.

Mary Felton loved deeply, just as she had feared deeply, as she had distrusted deeply. There was no room in her character for half qualities.

She had finished, so she believed, with the dark side of love; to some it comes late, to others early—her future seemed to stretch before her in the high, white light of safety.

Never in the years to come would she doubt Clifford Ellsworth. Other women would come into his life, it is true, for they lived in a world where the marriage vow is lightly held and where the soul's infidelity is a jest. She was sure of him, as she could not have been had she taken measures to prevent his meeting and knowing Inez

Blair, as so many women might have done. She had faced a situation which had required all her nerve, all her resources of patience and audacity. It seemed to her that she had played the braver part.

One day, she and Inez were sitting in the library together, when Mary's lover came. It was one of his unexpected visits which always delighted her more than the stereotyped ones of habit or appointment. She accompanied him to the door after his brief call, and they chatted a moment in the hall. When she returned, she ran up the stairs lightly, her soft footfalls making no distinct sound on the thick rugs. Inez was standing at the window looking into the street, watching intently the departing figure, one hand was dragging back the heavy folds of the curtain so that she could see more clearly; in the other, she held a book she had taken from the near-by table. Suddenly she flung the volume to the floor, and crushed it violently with her foot. "Fool, fool, fool," she said distinctly, through tightly closed teeth, "an old woman's promise"—again she ejaculated "fool," and again she pushed the book with disdainful touch. Then the mood passed, and she stooped to pick it up; it was while she was in this attitude that Mary Felton stole unnoticed from the room, and, exhausted by a sudden fear, an unexplainable, choking sensation, sat for a moment on the stairs, leaning her head wearily against the rail to recover.

Promise! What promise? Why was she a fool? Why should watching Clifford Ellsworth's departure affect a woman who was so controlled, so sure of herself as Inez Blair?

A maid's footsteps fluttered down the stairs toward her. "Come, Miss Mary, at once! Your aunt is calling—hurry!"

It was while Death was master of the house, Death, who unlocks the secret recesses of thought and soul, that the explanation of the riddle came to her. Worn by suffering and by watching, her senses acutely sensitive, she saw clearly the scheme in which she had been the dupe.

It was no idle coincidence that she had overheard Inez's exclamation, for there is no such thing as idle coincidence in the unpitying law of life, the letter with its betraying secret, the overheard exclamation, the sudden return—they are all subservient agents to this spiritual law.

She remembered the words of one who had recognized and written of this:

It is vain to attempt to keep a secret from one who has a right to know it—that mood in which a friend can bring us in his dominion over us. To the thoughts of that mood he has a right. All the secrets of that state of mind he can compel.

She had unknowingly forced the secret from Inez—that was all, in answer to this fundamental rule. What matter the manner of its betrayal; it was sure to be, soon or late.

Step by step, she retraced the path; she could see clearly now. It was, of course, Mrs. Green, who, in mistaken faith, had betrayed her. She thought once of writing to her, then thrust the thought aside. It was too late—and of what importance were the details when she had the fact in her possession?

This was the meaning of Inez's seeming apathy. She was under promise to hold herself in check, not to exert her fascination for fear of robbing her friend of her one possession.

What a position for a proud woman to be placed in! What an outrage to her sensibilities! Mary felt that she was holding a man's faith and affections on sufferance—that was what it amounted to. There was another woman who had the right to say, "it is only by my forbearance that this is possible; it is only because I have rendered myself a negative force that you can enjoy your positive happiness."

It was an intolerable situation for any woman, but for her whose pride was so great, it was doubly so. She was receiving a gift from Inez Blair—the gift of the future, and the knowledge of that would be ever present, a killjoy to every feast, the cloud in her sky shadowing enjoyment.

She knew Inez Blair well; she knew

her faults as well as her virtues. If she had once given her word, she would keep it, for she had an unusual steadfastness of purpose under seeming superficiality. Moreover, she was too subtle to be entangled in any web where she would have to admit her artificial attitude in order to free herself.

She could not contend with Inez in cleverness, that she realized. There was but one thing she could do to release herself from the present perplexity. It was only by this direct method she could be true to herself. She would do it at once, before time and inclination together should strive to weaken her resolve. She would break her engagement with Clifford Ellsworth. With one word, she would free them both, her lover from his vows, her friend from the promise unduly exacted from her. She could not accept her happiness on its present weakly-based foundation, and no other solution to the problem presented itself to her.

She announced her determination to Clifford Ellsworth by letter. She did not dare trust herself in a personal interview. She stated simply that she had changed her mind—the woman's privilege. She begged him not to attempt to alter her new viewpoint by personal suasion. She did not say that she had ceased to love him, but so far as indefinite words may be made to serve a definite purpose, she conveyed to him the unalterable nature of her convictions.

Her intuition told her that he would disobey; that he would not be satisfied with her evasive letter, so, in order to avoid meeting him, she left town and took refuge with Mrs. Green, to whom she announced only the fact of her broken faith without assigning any reason. One other person she told, Inez Blair, as she was the only other friend who had known positively of her engagement.

Such a course of procedure in a woman governed completely by her own emotions would have been impossible. To such a one, mere possession would

have answered all questions and all unhappiness. There would have been moments of doubt, but these would have been more than balanced by the joy of a certain tie. In Mary Felton there was a finer sense. The mere bond meant nothing to her unless it were indicative of the bond of the spirit. To know that Clifford Ellsworth might some time find Inez Blair with the mask of indifference removed, might too late become hopelessly enthralled, and then resent the vow that held him, was a possibility she could not face.

At the country home of Mrs. Green, she awaited developments in the callousness of feeling which comes as the reaction from decision.

The finality of her action, as outlined to Inez Blair, gave to the latter the freedom which she had long desired in regard to Clifford Ellsworth. She had resented her hastily given promise, she had desired to test his attraction by the agent of her own. The mere fact that she had been prevented from so doing, enveloped him with a greater interest than he would otherwise have possessed. For the first time in her life, Inez Blair gave herself up to the force of an emotional experience.

Clifford Ellsworth came to her immediately. She was the only one who knew of his engagement and its rupture. She had possessed no particular attraction in the days of his engagement, he had looked upon her merely as a friend of his fiancée, without individual cataloguing in his scheme of life. He found in her now a woman who had new meanings for him to read, new allurements for his undoing. He was humiliated, wounded, astray; she soothed him, understood him, focussed his wandering spirit.

He wrote many times to Mary Felton. He begged her again and again with protestations, with prayers, with a strange lack of pride which was alien to his character and traditions. All to no avail. Her purpose, the reason of which remained sealed, was unchanged by his eloquence, and, at last, even his letters were unanswered.

By her own act, Mary Felton had meshed herself in a web of intricacies. Had she done wisely? She did not know, but, given the same circumstances, she felt that she must have done the same. Thought, grief and fear led her to no other possible solution. Sometimes she was on the point of writing and explaining all, then something restrained her; it would do no good to go over the same ground again; his faith renewed could give her no permanence of belief, excepting as he was able to understand the path she had chosen.

One day, she received a note from Inez Blair, announcing her engagement to Clifford Ellsworth. It was half apologetic in tone, wholly triumphant. She read it with emotion. It is the expected that hurts most.

The days that followed had no remembrance. There was but one dominant thought, that she had done well. Her suspicions, it seemed, were rightly founded, she would have lost him eventually, and the mere fact that she was his wife would have made the loss but the more severely felt.

The engagement of Inez Blair and Clifford Ellsworth, published immediately, made a great stir. She was an advertised beauty, he, a man of achievement and promise. The wedding was to be a fashionable function, and the papers were filled with daily paragraphs of truths and half-truths concerning it.

Six weeks elapsed between the date of the announcement and that set for its consummation. To Mary Felton these days passed as in a dream. Mrs. Green, after her first irritability and wonder, wisely forbore comment, and left her to her own communings.

These led her, as the day of the wedding approached, to a sudden decision. She was impelled to the city. She felt that she must be there, breathing again the same air with him. The distance of the intervening miles seemed all at once intolerable.

The chill air of the early Spring crept through the house, untenanted so

long save by the caretakers, and oppressed her anew with physical fears. It was the wedding eve and, by a strange coincidence, was the anniversary of her aunt's death. Well-lighted rooms and the open fire could not dispel the gloom. She walked restlessly up and down.

The curtains at the door swung backward with a quick motion, and she went slowly toward him.

She knew now why she had returned; she had expected this.

He wasted no time in preliminaries. He was very pale, and there were lines in his face to which she was a stranger.

"I was walking by the house," he said, hesitatingly. "I walk by it frequently. I saw the lights and I knew you had returned."

She tried to regain control of the floods of feeling which were sweeping her away.

"Why did you do it?" he asked, and took her hands, unresisting, in his.

"You know I love you!" How far away his voice seemed! "To me you have been the only one. How cruel you were! Why did you do it?"

He crushed her hands together, hurting her, then, loosing them, walked away. For a few moments he paced restlessly back and forth.

"I have no right to ask you, perhaps. I should accept your evasions, your silences. But always I have been haunted by the belief that in some way I failed you. I want to know how it was. I want you to forgive me if it is true. I tried. It is hard for a man to read a woman; sometimes he hurts her when he only means to worship."

Still she was silent; there was a physical reason. It seemed to her that there were sinewy fingers gripping her throat. She could not for the life of her articulate a sound.

"To-morrow," his voice faltered, "you know what happens, to-morrow. There is only one thing to take into the new life, only one fact that will have importance in its unimportance—that I did not fail you. That it was your wish that prompted you to ruin my

life, not my weakness. I could not stand that."

The invisible fingers seemed to loosen their grip.

"You did not fail me—at first."

"At first? When did I fail? It is all a riddle." He smoothed his brow with a tired gesture. "Tell me—it is the last time; talk to me as you would have talked to me in the old days."

Then she told him the pitiful story. How trivial it seemed repeating it, how impossible to make another understand the agonies of doubt and suspicion from which she had suffered! How banal it seemed to her now that she had staked her life's happiness in such a way! To him it was incredible. Yet, banal, weak and ineffective as it sounded, she could not rid herself of the knowledge that she could not have acted differently.

He led her to a dim corner.

"Listen. To-morrow Inez Blair is to become my wife for better or for worse—you know the formula. To-night is the last night I shall live, afterward I shall just go on, as so many of my fellows do, bravely, I hope, hiding my true self, becoming little by little careless, indifferent; unmoved by the events of the hours which only love can illumine and arrange in the proper perspective.

"I never loved Inez. When we first met, I was attracted by her wonderful beauty, by her grace and charm. Any man susceptible to those qualities, must have been. Afterward, I thought little of her. When a man is in love, there is the one woman and the other woman—she was in the latter

class. When you refused to see me, to listen to my prayers, I saw her again. She was transformed. Where once there had been nothing, there were sympathy and affection. I had drifted until I saw you. You do not know, dear, what it is for a man to drift, and most of us do until we meet the one woman who can anchor us. I believed then that the days of shifting winds and currents were over. Then I was made to drift again. But with this difference: before, there was Hope at the helm, now the ship was pilotless. It was the difference between drifting on Summer seas, and in the night on a chartless ocean. I was going toward sure shipwreck. It was then that Inez came. There has been no unfaith to you in my soul. My life was broken, I tried to take its fragments and piece them together, that is all."

She remembered the night her aunt had died; she had felt the unseen nearness of Death, not as a vague, intangible idea, but as a conscious presence. She remembered how, in that holy hour that preceded the confessional, she had felt this Presence drawing them together until at last, as their hands were enfolded, life had fled.

In the long-untended house were strange influences, in the chill of the unused air, in the mysterious driftings of the light draperies, in the weird silences, she realized again the Uninvited Guest, and, as in the dim corner, she felt the lingering touches of her lover, she knew again the agony of an eternal separation.



## A THEOLOGICAL QUESTION

"PAPA, is hell right down underneath?"

"Certainly, my boy. I hope you haven't any doubts about it."

"Well, you know, papa, I don't see how it can be there, when it has been raised so many times."

## A GAME OF LETTERS

By Marjorie A. Barkley

"**W**ELL, of all things!" said the literary girl as she dropped into her desk-chair, "here's that story, the third that the Boyd Syndicate has returned this month."

She opened the long envelope with her paper-knife, and sniffed disdainfully at the printed slip that fluttered from among the type-written pages, and fell, face up, on her desk. Below the usual complimentary regrets, this was scrawled:

"Too bad, but don't be discouraged. Send me short, spicy love stories. This is too long.      D."

The girl smiled as she re-read it several times, then, taking her pen, she wrote on blue note-paper:

PHILADELPHIA.

To "D":

Many thanks for your postscript. The short, spicy love story will soon be in process of evolution. Do not forget me in the meantime.

DELLA HUNT.

P. S.—They tell me that you are a woman. Otherwise—you understand.

D. H.

March the tenth.

NEW YORK, March 12.

MISS HUNT:

We await your story with interest. Considering its creator, we feel that it ought to crackle with crispness.

D.

PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR D:

Your compliment is doubtful, but, remembering your sex, I do not won-

der. You really should have been a man.

The story is progressing slowly.  
DELLA HUNT.  
March the seventeenth.

NEW YORK, March 18.

Thank you, your compliment isn't doubtful for it happens that I am a man. Send the story on when it's ready.

D.

PHILADELPHIA.  
TO THE BOYD SYNDICATE, New York:  
Enclosed is a "short, spicy story," which I submit for your inspection.  
I thank you in advance for any attention you may give it.

Sincerely,

DELLA HUNT.

March the thirty-first.

NEW YORK, April 15.

MISS HUNT:

Dear Madam: Enclosed find cheque for ten dollars. Your story is crisp and clever.

BOYD SYNDICATE.

P. S.—Please notice that the cheque I send you is much more desirable than the one you gave me. Isn't it too bad that nice girls can't be just a little gamey?

D.

PHILADELPHIA.

To D:

Many thanks for the cheque. Believe me, I am a little gamey. Isn't it deplorable that gamey men can't be nice?

I'm writing another story.  
DELLA HUNT.  
April the sixteenth.

NEW YORK, April 17.

I shall hope to see the new story.  
 Do you ever come to New York?  
 Any policeman can tell you where to  
 find Park Row.

D.

PHILADELPHIA.

Yes, I often visit New York. I can  
 find Park Row, but how ridiculous I'd  
 feel when I asked at the Boyd Syndi-  
 cate for "D."

DELLA HUNT.

April the twentieth.

NEW YORK, April 22.

DEAR MISS HUNT:

I beg your pardon for neglecting to  
 give you my name. Enclosed is my  
 card. When you come to New York,  
 will you lunch or dine with me?

Very truly,  
 JOHN DRAKE.

PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR MR. DRAKE:

Thank you for your card, and the  
 thoughtful invitation. Mr. Hunt and  
 I shall make the trip together, and we  
 shall be happy to have you dine with  
 us.

Sincerely,  
 DELLA HUNT.

April the twenty-fifth.

NEW YORK, April 27.

DEAR MRS. HUNT:

It is I who must thank you. Per-  
 haps you and your husband would en-  
 joy a little dinner in our home. My  
 wife will consider your acceptance a  
 great favor.

Cordially,  
 JOHN DRAKE.

PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR MR. DRAKE:

We leave on Tuesday for your city,  
 and we feel that to meet you and Mrs.  
 Drake will be a great privilege.

You really must not address me as  
 Mrs. Hunt. Harrison Hunt, Prince-  
 ton '99, is my brother, you know. He  
 often tells me of his classmate, Jack  
 Drake. Is Mrs. Drake your sister?

Sincerely,  
 DELLA HUNT.

April the thirtieth.

NEW YORK, May 1.

MY DEAR MISS HUNT:

This certainly is the finest surprise I  
 ever experienced. So you are old  
 "Happy Harrison's" sister. I might  
 have known it, but I confess that I did  
 not associate the two names at all.  
 Needless to say, I am doubly anxious  
 to meet you now.

Have Harrison telegraph the time  
 and place of your arrival, and I will  
 meet you. So you knew who I was all  
 along? In that case I must, I suppose,  
 answer to the grave charge of flirting.

"Mrs. Drake" isn't my sister. She's  
 fiction. The laugh, and incidentally  
 the dinner, are both on me.

In eager anticipation,  
 JOHN DRAKE.

Two years later

VENICE, Italy.

DEAR HARRISON:

We have just reached our hotel.  
 Italy is full of just the color that we  
 need for the new novel; we only want  
 time to absorb it.

More anon. Jack sends love.

Yours ever,  
 DELLA HUNT DRAKE.

P. S.—Doesn't the new name look  
 nice? D. D.



OF all sad words of tongue or pen,  
 The saddest are these: "Where have you been?"

# THE LOVE OF MR. BING DANG

By Margaret A. Klein

SIX years after his ninth birthday, any one who did not know might have supposed Willie Norris—our baby friend, Mr. Bing Dang—to be at least eighteen years of age. He was not large; he was rather thin and pale, yet there was a man-of-the-world air about him which made him seem older than he actually was. So it is with many city boys, the kind for whom the old rhyme was made:

I can shoot a musket,  
I can smoke a pipe;  
I can kiss a pretty girl  
At ten o'clock at night.

Willie was just beginning to notice the girls, and to drink in the wisdom of the other fellows who told of their "affairs" and "cases," with "Hang it, man, that girl broke me all up!" or, "Devil take it, I wish she hadn't made me say that!" or, "Gosh, fellows, if you'd only seen her when I told her how I felt!" or, despairingly, "Darn it, I just made a fool of myself!"

Mr. Bing Dang had begun to notice girls. One day when he was out on his wheel, he crossed Columbus avenue, and stepped into a little candy shop near the corner to get a box of jujubes. A box of jujubes! Weeks later, he flew into a rage, and wanted the chambermaid dismissed because that box, which, empty and smashed, was the chief treasure on his chiffonier, had been thrown away in cleaning his room.

For weeks, Mr. Bing Dang thought that in this candy shop he had met his fate. The "fate" was a plump, fair girl, with a bang curled on the tongs. She had sold him the jujubes.

The next day, he felt the need of

more sweets, so he went into the shop, and began by asking how much peppermints were by the pound. As if he did not know! But his "fate" answered him so politely, and he went on inquiring the price of so many kinds of candy, that, when he came finally to the peanut brittle, and she asked if he would not have some of that, he rashly, in his confusion, took two pounds, and rode away on his wheel with the bag in one hand. A great joy seemed to possess him, and he threw all the candy to the squirrels in the Park, and rode round and round all the cycle paths till it was dinner-time.

Again, the next day, Willie went back to the shop, and this time he asked instantly for a half-pound of chocolates. Other customers were there, and he had no chance to linger. The girl looked at him as she handed the box across the counter, but she did not seem to recognize him. This gave Mr. Bing Dang a peculiar feeling of disappointment. He ate the chocolates himself, with one of the fellows who dropped in that evening.

"Pretty good, aren't they?"

"Fair, Bing. No, no more, thanks, old man."

Bing himself ate the rest. He thought them unusually fine, better even than the candy he had often bought at the best places. He slipped the box into the waste-basket lest his friend should see where it came from, and go there for something himself. No doubt, he was merely feigning indifference to the quality of the chocolates—sly rogue!—when he said they were only fair. Bing had resolved

not to tell any of the boys about this girl in the shop; at least, he would not talk about her until he knew her better.

And to know her better Bing went to the shop for many a pound of chocolates, marshmallows, nougatines, fancy mixed, or glacé nuts. Jujubes he bought no more; they were sacred to that first day.

During his earlier visits, the girl put these things up mechanically for the new customer; soon she began to notice him, then to look for him every day. Once, she stood with a blue ribbon bow in her hair, and smiled as he came in at the door, and again when she asked him what he would have. He would have had the whole shop that day, or at least a five-pound box of something; but it was the end of the month, and his allowance was short. He bought only a pound of the peanut brittle. This time, it was put in a box, and the squirrels shared it with him in the Park, where he sat a long time, until the three squirrels which had been eating from his hands had scampered away. Then, he remembered that he had promised to meet one of the fellows, and go for a ride. So, he had to hurry home, order up the horse, get into his togs, and be on the way.

Bing did not get to the shop in Columbus avenue as often as he wished. He had lessons to do, because the bore of college was ahead of him, and there were all sorts of other things to claim his attention; besides, it was not always easy to get away from his companions.

By this time, though, he knew that the girl's name was Flora. He had heard her mother call her that. Her mother was too often in the shop, Bing thought. She generally wore a flowered cotton wrapper, with a white apron tied round her waist to confine its folds about her ample person. She seemed to be the head of things, and to this day Bing does not know if Flora had a father living or dead. Her mother was obstacle enough for him. Sometimes, when he would get a

chance to go in, he would see her there sewing alone, and he would retreat hastily, thinking she had not seen him.

Once, Bing, who had not seen Flora for what seemed to him a long while, was out walking with his chum. Despite Bing's many hints, Van kept at his side. Finally, rather than miss for another day a glimpse of the lovely girl, Bing decided that he would take Van into the shop, and see what he thought of Flora's surpassing beauty. Perhaps, he could tell Van how matters stood with him. Van was safe, for he himself was infatuated with a brilliant, dark-eyed woman, who was a distant cousin of his, and old enough to have been his mother if she had married young.

So, Bing led his friend by the place, and said, quite casually, "Come in, old man, and let's have some chocolates."

"This place?" said Van, looking about.

"Oh, it's all right; come in." And Bing led the way. But he had scarcely passed the threshold when he suddenly turned and almost darted for the street.

"Lord, man, it's the old woman! Break away!"

"What do you mean? What's up?" asked Van; but there was no explanation from Mr. Bing Dang.

It was not long before Bing's love had ripened so that he felt he must show it in some other way than by going in and staring at Flora, and asking for a pound of this or a half-pound of that. So, one day, he took her a dozen bridesmaid's roses.

"For me?" she cried, as he handed them to her. "They're lovely!" And she glanced up and blushed, and he looked across the counter at her a long while without saying anything, till a little girl rattled her pennies against the glass case, with, "Pleath give me two thenth worth of gum dropth." They both started, and Mr. Bing Dang blushed, and went out without buying anything.

Another day, he took her violets—a two-dollar bunch with a purple rib-

bon, which cost extra, tied round them. She was busy when he went in, but her mother was not to be seen; so he waited, drumming on the case over a box of candied cherries. By-and-bye, all the people went out, and Flora and he were alone.

"I brought you these," said Bing, handing her the violets.

"Thank you; they're beautiful."

"Won't you put them on? There's a long pin with them."

"I believe I will. Aren't they sweet?"

"Are they? Let me smell them." And the artful Bing leaned over close to her to catch their fragrance.

"They are nice; but not so nice and pretty as some things I know."

"Candies, you mean? You seem to like them." She dimpled and blushed, and he looked down and cleared his throat to speak.

"Oh, confound it!" he said, under his breath, for just then an old gentleman and two little girls came in the shop. Bing went off, muttering to himself. "Don't see why all these idiot people want to eat so much of that nasty sweet stuff. Why don't they keep out of that place, and let a fellow have a little peace? That's what I'd like to know."

He walked up the avenue impatiently, and after a long while he found himself on the heights overlooking Morningside Park. He leaned against the railing, and gazed down. It was late in the afternoon of a mild February day. Workmen were clipping the shrubs along the borders of the driveway on the slope below him. The gloom of evening was settling over the city, and the lights of the houses across the Park began to glimmer through the dusk.

Bing had noticed nothing in particular till these lights called him from his reverie.

"Oh, hang it all!" said he; "what's a fellow to do?" Then, he went rapidly down the hill, took a Columbus-avenue car, and got off at the door of Flora's shop.

The girl was alone this time, in the

back of the place, looking at herself in a little mirror there.

"Oh," she said, as he came in, "it's you, is it?"

"Yes. Oh, I say, why can't I see you some time? I'd like to, awfully. Can't I meet you somewhere? Can't we fix it? I can't see anything of you here, you know."

"No," said Flora, quietly, with a glance at both the front and back door; "but we could go to walk somewhere."

"Say, could we? When? Where shall I meet you?"

Then, they arranged to meet the next Sunday afternoon at four o'clock, at the Eighty-fifth-street entrance to the Park. Flora was supposed to go over to see her aunt on the East Side at that time, but she could call there later, or give up the visit altogether, and her mother need not know.

They met. Flora really looked rather pretty in her Sunday-afternoon finery, and Bing wondered how it was a girl could make him feel so strange when she looked at him.

There still were patches of snow on the ground here and there, but it was a sunny afternoon, and the air was almost Springlike. There was an old gentleman out in his wheel-chair; a baby was asleep in its carriage while its nurse gossiped with a friend; men sat around on benches, and smoked; and boys and girls played games with one another, or sped about on roller-skates. At the duck-pond, Bing and Flora stopped to watch the swans and ducks and geese, some standing or sitting on the ice, others swimming where the ice had broken away, quacking softly now and then, each in its peculiar fashion.

Farther up, on the banks of a little stream, they lingered a while.

"Look!" said Flora; "those are coming out already!" And she pointed to the catkins hanging in brown tassels from the bushes by the water.

"That's a sign Spring is coming, isn't it?"

"I guess so. Don't you want to sit down? I'm tired."

"So am I. We'll sit here on this bench."

The sun had gone too far down to reach that spot. It was damp under the trees and getting colder, but neither Bing nor Flora heeded. Both were silent for a long while.

"Say," said Bing, at last, "I don't suppose you could love a fellow, could you?"

"Well, maybe I could," answered Flora, and she nestled up to him.

"Oh, could you, though?" and he kissed her several times. A policeman loomed up in the distance. Both felt chilly at once and rose to go.

Flora went as quickly as she could over to her aunt's, and found her mother waiting there for her. She had never before come to meet her, and all that she said was, "Herman has come back and will be at the house to-night."

Bing walked home, whistling most of the time. That night, he worked out all the problems in his algebra lesson for the next day.

It was nearly a week before he saw Flora again. He did go by the shop once, but only her mother stood behind the counter, and he passed on. The next time he looked in, Flora was alone. He entered hastily, slipped something into her hand, squeezing it as he did so, and went out without saying a word.

Flora peeped into the tiny white box. On a bed of pink cotton, there was a brooch of forget-me-nots enameled in blue, each flower with a tiny pearl in the centre. Bing had received his month's allowance that morning.

"Let me see that what you have there," said Flora's mother, entering the shop from the back door at that moment. "What I told you now, eh? Give it to me!" And Flora handed it to her.

It seemed to Bing after this that he would never have a chance again to see Flora alone. Either her mother was serving in the shop when he went by, or there were customers there, or Flora and her mother were both behind the counter. The less chance he had of

seeing her, the more he loved her, and the more he wished to take her to walk and to kiss her again. Finally, he went in one day when her mother was there waiting on a customer. Flora came forward to him.

"I'll take a pound of those," said Bing, pointing to the candied cherries. When he got his parcel, he handed back a little note folded in the dollar-bill he gave in payment:

Will you meet me same time, same place, next Sunday?

He thought she said yes as she gave him his change. He reached the door. The other customer passed him going out. Then, Bing heard a harsh voice:

"Young man, I have something to say with you."

He turned. Flora's mother was glaring at him. Poor Bing Dang! And, to make matters worse, Flora, at a nod from the older woman, passed out the back way, closing the door behind her.

"Young man, it may be you are not much more than a kid, and don't know no better. But, if you come here to buy, all right; we sell you what we've got to sell, and you go when you have buy. But it is not so, I think, that we have much what you want to buy."

Bing dropped his parcel on the counter. Flora's mother went on: "What I tell you that is not for sale is my Flora. Maybe, she told you she is engaged already to nice fellow what is house-painter by big contractors. Next month, she gets married already, if you keep away and she get her senses back and not spoil her chances before that time come."

"Well, ah—good day, madam," said Bing. And he went out hastily, leaving the box of candied cherries behind him. He could not remember exactly what he had said, but he had a notion that he had acted in rather a manly fashion. So he had. No man could have closed the affair in better style. He knew he was defeated, and surrendered unconditionally.

That evening, he smoked out a pack of cigarettes, and lighted his pipe, and put his feet up on his study-table.

Van came in about ten o'clock.

"Hello, Bing!" he said; "what's up?"

"By George, old fellow, when a man's been in love and been knocked out of the ring, well—" And he proceeded to tell Van all about it.

"And you think she was pretty, old man?"

"Oh, well, kind of. Awful poor stuff that candy was; 'most upset my stomach. And the old woman! Well, you saw her. Whew!"



### A FAINT HEART

**H**E looked too long at her. A-thrall  
Unto her whims both light and wise,  
Her face in dreams he could recall;  
He looked too long.

He breathed his passion in his sighs,  
But not one word could e'er let fall.  
Such silence caused her great surprise.

At last, one day, he told it all—  
But told too late. She raised her eyes;  
By waiting thinned, he loomed so tall,  
He looked—too long!

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.



### MOTHER HUBBARD IN NEW YORK

**O**LD MOTHER HUBBARD started to get up and give her poor dog a bone, when there was a sharp ring at the door, and the janitor appeared.  
"No dogs here!" he said, sternly.  
"But," said Mother Hubbard, "I was only going to the cupboard."  
"Cupboard!" yelled the janitor, as he threw the dog out the window.  
"That, madam, is one of the roomiest rooms in the flat!"



### THE ONLY CURE

**B**RIGGS—There's no use. I can't make love to that girl and attend to my business.

GRIGGS—What are you going to do—marry her?

## IF JUNE WERE MINE

**I**F June were mine, I'd weave for you—  
 Of roses red and skies of blue,  
 Of golden sun and orchard sheen,  
 Of blossom-fretted damascene—  
 A veil of every petal-hue.

And from the morning mists of dew  
 Distil a fairy stream, that through  
 The woods should wend a way serene,  
 If June were mine.

And, e'er the purple dusk anew  
 The curtains of the sunset drew,  
 Adown the river's dream demesne,  
 I'd paint a path incarnadine,  
 And drift into the dawn with you,  
 If June were mine.

CHESTER FIRKINS.



## TIMES CHANGE

**B**RIGGS—It's a funny thing about morality and how it changes with every age. At one time it was immoral for a man to kiss his wife on Sunday.

**GRIGGS**—And now it's simply tiresome.



## A SPECULATION

**C**LARA—Sadie is going to marry that old chap who has been refused by all the insurance companies.

**MAUD**—That's the reason why she accepted him.



**F**IRST PEACH—We seem about to be preserved.

**SECOND PEACH**—Yes. Wouldn't it jar you!

## NEW FRIENDS AND OLD

By A. M. Chisholm

"**S**HE flirts disgracefully," said Florrie.

"I thought she did it rather well," said I, incautiously.

A coal fire blazed merrily. Tiny white spurts of smoke flung outward from the grate, and jets of gas, burned blue as the flame, lapped them. It was very comfortable in Florrie's sitting-room, after a struggle with a car service badly demoralized by the first severe storm of the Winter. Back of the low-lying circle of light thrown by the shaded lamp were well-filled bookcases, draped with some soft material pendent from brass rods shining in the firelight. A piano occupied one corner, and a writing-desk, broad and flat, which also served the purpose of a work-table, had its place near the white-curtained window. A cozy-corner, heaped with soft, well-used cushions, was to the right of the fireplace. A banjo, photographs and pictures adorned the walls, and the mantelpiece was covered with small, fragile articles of pottery and statuary, whose names I had often vainly tried to remember. The room was thoroughly feminine, but the big easy-chairs were masculine and full of comfort. Also, permission to smoke might be had by good behavior.

Into this pleasant haven crept dissension. My last remark was ill-considered, and immediately led me into difficulties.

"Perhaps you have had opportunities for observation?" suggested Florrie, in a dangerously gentle way.

I disclaimed, hastily. "Not at all. I have only met her once or twice. If I remember correctly, I was in-

troduced to her one night last Summer at the boat club."

"You danced with her," Florrie asserted.

"I did not," said I, virtuously.

"Then you sat out with her."

"Not exactly."

"What did you do?" demanded Florrie, browbeating the witness.

"Well," I admitted, reluctantly, "it was fairly simmering under that gravel roof, so, just to get cool, we took a canoe and paddled out a little way. The music sounds much nicer from the water."

Florrie nodded her blond head in severe comprehension. She possesses a cultivated taste in musical and other matters. The case for the defense, however, suffered thereby.

"What did you do then?"

"Then? Oh, nothing! She dabbled her hands in the water, and I smoked."

"Was it moonlight?" pursued Florrie, relentlessly.

"Let me see. Yes, there was a moon."

"Ah! And, of course, you paddled around the bay to the river."

Florrie would have made a great success as a cross-examiner.

"Yes, we went that far," I admitted.

"Didn't you go up the river?"

"I think we did—a little way."

"Up the right bank, where the trees droop over?" suggested counsel, insinuatingly.

"There is less current by the right bank," I explained, endeavoring to make the admission as little damaging as possible.

"And there is more shadow. Did she call it heavenly?"

"I believe she liked the scenery."

"I have no doubt of it. Did you tell her you found an added beauty in it that night?"

Counsel, now convinced of the reluctance of the witness, was pressing the question. Also, counsel's technical knowledge was beyond dispute.

"I said I liked the place; so I do."

"When she 'dabbled her hands,' as you call it, did she roll up her sleeves?"

"She couldn't very well let them get wet."

"Then she did roll them up. Did you say anything about moonlight and white arms?"

"Well, they were white."

"Did you take her hand?"

"How could I? I was paddling," said I, in excuse. "You know how it is in a canoe—so tottish. You can't do what—"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," interrupted Florrie, with severity. "She was flirting shamelessly, and you were worse, if anything. I do not want to hear any more. If you must flirt with every girl who is silly enough to listen to you, at least don't tell me about it."

"Why, you asked me what happened."

"I did not think so much happened."

"Absolutely nothing happened," said I, regretfully. "Circumstances beyond my control made it necessary to go back. She said she couldn't stay away from her aunt any longer, and certainly the old lady looked relieved when we got in safely from what she called 'that treacherous canoe.'"

"I should think she would," said Florrie, unkindly.

I looked at her, reflectively.

"Then," said I, "I went to look for you."

"That was very good of you," observed Florrie, with sarcasm.

"I couldn't find you," I proceeded. "Carson told me you and some chap had strolled down toward the cliff beach." I surprised a somewhat thoughtful expression in Florrie's eyes. "So I followed, to say that Mrs. Digby

was looking for you. When I got down under the bluff, I saw a lady and gentleman seated there, apparently much interested in each other."

Florrie became slightly red.

"Of course," said I, "I came away at once."

Florrie looked relieved.

"Because," I went on, "I heard him say, 'We can neither of us forget those days, can we, dear?'"

Florrie grew scarlet, opened her lips and shut them again.

"It seemed a pity that they should," I continued. "They were evidently pleasant days, and memories of them would be light burdens to carry through life. He was holding her hand, I believe."

"They may have been old friends," said Florrie, in a very small voice. "Perhaps they had not seen each other for a long time."

"It seemed as if there might be arrears."

"And perhaps they would not see each other again for years to come; it may have been good-bye between them forever."

"Partings of old friends are always painful, but I thought the chances were—"

"She may have thought she was fond of him when a very young girl, and may have found out her mistake."

"Oh, well, we are all entitled to our youthful fancies, of course!"

Florrie did not immediately reply. She looked pensively into the heart of the canal fire, and her foot began to tap nervously on the hide of a polar bear that formed the hearth-rug. Her interlaced fingers twisted against each other unconsciously, from which indications I inferred that I was to hear more, and I patiently awaited developments.

"It must have been," said Florrie, at length, "quite five years since I saw him, Jack."

"So long as that?"

Florrie withdrew her gaze from the fire. She rested her cheek on her hand, and looked up into my face confidingly. I preserved, I hope, an appearance of

interested attention, but, as a matter of fact, I was almost entirely engrossed in watching the play of the firelight in her eyes and on her hair.

"Quite five years," she repeated, firmly. "We were great friends at one time—that was before I knew you, Jack—and there was a time when I thought that—that—"

"Yes, you thought that—?" I remarked, encouragingly. Certainly the curve of her cheek was perfect.

"That I liked him well enough, you know; and, that night by the cliff, we talked over old times."

"That was nice."

"Well, it was, in a way, but rather sad. We have both changed greatly in those five years, I suppose. He has been in the West most of the time, prospecting and mining, and somehow he is quite different. I suppose it is the life. How lonely it must be, Jack, with nobody but Indians to talk to for weeks at a time!"

"I suppose he often thought of you and your old friendship when he was in the wilderness?" I ventured.

"Yes, he said he did."

"No wonder. When a man shuts the door on civilization for a time, his thoughts almost invariably go back to it, and to the people he knew best, who helped to make his life what it was. What a gap there is between an evening spent before the fire with you, in this cozily furnished room, and one by a lonely camp-fire, or in a noisy little hotel in a mining town. That old friendship and your memory would help him to resist many temptations."

"How did you know that?"

"It is human nature, I suppose—the constant striving of good against evil. The influence of pure, good associations clings to us when we are removed from them. Yes, he would often think of you at night, and your face might come to him in dreams."

"He said he used to dream of me, and wonder if I wasted a stray thought on him."

I nodded, sympathetically. Evidently, Florrie's old friend had played the game strictly according to rule. I

mentally put myself in his place, and thought out the next move.

"Yes, I can understand. He would wonder, too, if, after all these years you could not pick up the broken strands and join them together in a strong cord of love."

"He—he wanted to begin where we left off."

"Of course, that was when he took your hand," I remarked, approvingly. I was curious to hear if the procedure varied in the West.

"Ye-es; I was so sorry for him."

"Naturally. What did you say?"

"I told him that it was impossible; that I liked him very much, but that—that—"

"It hurt him, I have no doubt."

"He said it was what he had feared; but he had hoped, and—and he almost broke down, Jack."

I became satisfied that the procedure did not vary in the West; it is stereotyped, the world over. I lost interest, but followed matters out to their logical conclusion.

"How a good woman may twine herself around a man's heart! He will always carry your memory as something holy in his breast, and at the end—well, it is too bad, Florrie."

"He said he would, Jack, and it was so sad—and I cried."

"And then he kissed you good-bye—a brother's kiss!"

"He did not!" cried Florrie, indignantly. "I wouldn't, of course!"

Evidently there had been a mistake somewhere; I was disappointed in the West.

"Not even on the forehead?" I asked, in surprise. "It seems to me he might have. You wouldn't stand for it, you say?"

"Certainly not!" exclaimed Florrie, turning very red. "How can you say such a thing?"

"I would, if I had been in his place," said I, reflectively. "He led up to it very well, too."

"Jack!"

"The resisting temptation and all that was apparently well done. He must have bungled it, somehow."

"Are you trying to make me angry?" demanded Florrie, with a strong effort at self-control.

"Not at all," said I. "I am merely reviewing the possibilities of the situation. My own opinion is that your friend did not make the most of his opportunities. He was not in a canoe, and there was not that excuse."

"It is quite time you went home," interrupted Florrie, with dignity. "I do not wish to hear of any more of your flirtations."

"This, of yours, resembles one slightly," I suggested, mildly.

"It was not a flirtation; it was a good-bye," said Florrie, with due sadness.

"And mine," said I, "was not even a good-bye; it was only an introduction."

I got up to go.

"I hope you may never have to say good-bye to a dear friend," said Florrie, reproachfully.

"At any rate," said I, taking my hat, "it cannot be said of me that I bungle my good-byes."

But the details, going to prove that statement, are quite immaterial.



## THE CHANOINESSE

WITH Vinagrette and purple robe and fan  
Madame Mathilde would take the morning air,  
And down the formal paths her old sedan  
Comes gravely moving 'round the bright *parterre*.

By graveled walk and grotto with their gleam  
Of marble nymph and satyr, row on row;  
Past storied oak, cascade and glen that seem  
The shepherd haunts of Boucher and Watteau.

The faithful Jacques and Joseph as of yore  
Go drowsing with her chair; they, too, can see  
The vision of the days—alas, no more—  
That steals her from her jeweled rosary.

It is Versailles she sees—the masks, the plays,  
*Pavanes* and minuets; she hears—beguiled—  
The horns of St. Germain's far hunting-days  
When beauty crowned her, and great Louis smiled.

And hark, another horn! Before her eyes  
There comes her lover—scarcely more than boy;  
She sees him pass in proud and martial guise;  
Her tears grow large—she weeps o'er Fontenoy.

Bright days of conquest—bitter memories  
That break her spirit!—till the old command  
Lights in her eyes as down the path she sees  
Her dear *curé* approaching, hat in hand.

THOMAS WALSH.

## RED CABBAGE TO WIN

By Isaac Anderson

I AM not a gambling man, though I do occasionally take a hand in a friendly game of poker for small stakes. Also, at rare intervals, I go to the races, and bet a few dollars on some horse that hasn't a ghost of a chance to win. But I never go to the pool-rooms, or, at least, I never did until yesterday afternoon. I should not have gone then, except for Singerton.

Singerton is a literary man—signs himself Edward Howard Singerton, and likes to hear himself referred to as a "rising young novelist," although he is neither young nor rising. He is a novelist, however. About fifteen years ago he wrote a novel which ran almost half-way through one edition. At present, this book is so rare that it can be found only in the second-hand book shops, where it is offered for sale at prices varying from five to ten cents a copy.

Since the publication of his first book, Singerton has spent his time gathering material for another. One would run across him in the most unlikely and disreputable places—always gathering material. He must have accumulated barrels and barrels of it. I sometimes suspected that he was trying to corner the market.

But this is a digression. I was about to tell you how Singerton inveigled me into a pool-room, and showed me how to make money without working. I met him quite by accident, and suggested a drink. I was not thirsty, but I was lonesome, and you can't go anywhere and sit down for a quiet chat without ordering something, you know.

Singerton accepted the invitation, and we went to a quiet little place just

around the corner. After the fifth or sixth drink he became confidential, and asked me if I wanted to make some money.

I replied that I did if it did not require too much exertion.

He reassured me on this point, and told me in a whisper that he had a good thing—a dead-sure winner—and that, out of regard for our lifelong friendship, he would let me in on it.

I thanked him with tears in my eyes, and we sallied forth to make our fortunes. After swearing me to eternal secrecy, Singerton led me up a long, dark stairway, and knocked twice at a heavy oak door. A slide was opened, my companion whispered something, and we were admitted.

The room into which we were ushered was not a large one, nor were there many people in it. At one end was a small table, and behind it a blackboard with some names and figures chalked upon it. I knew immediately that the place was a pool-room, although the man who presided at the table did not look in the least like the book-makers I had seen at the races. His face was rather more refined than his occupation would lead one to expect, and his clothes were in very good taste, and not at all loud.

I soon turned my attention from the man to the odds written on the blackboard. They ran something like this:

Green Trapezoid.....	3-5
Naughty Dan.....	12-1
Caramel Annie .....	15-1
Lonely Mary.....	5-1
Lady Jane's Daughter-in-Law....	1-2
Red Cabbage .....	50-1

and about twenty more. I was reading over the list a second time, to see

if I could find a horse that I had ever heard of before, when a young man at my elbow addressed me, asking what I intended to play.

I replied, rather coldly, that I had not yet made up my mind. I had met "touts" before, at the race-tracks, and had no desire to deal with one of that profession.

But the young man was not to be rebuffed so easily. "Play Green Trapezoid," he whispered. "It's a sure winner. I am employed by Scribblers, and I've got inside information."

At this point we were interrupted by Singerton, who dragged me away to the furthest corner of the room. "Don't have anything to do with that fellow," he said. "He's a 'tout.' You play my tip, and you'll come out on top."

I answered that I was merely leading the young fellow on, to see what his game was. "What are you going to play?" I asked.

"Sh!" said Singerton. "How much money have you?"

I took out my roll, and counted it—forty-seven dollars and some odd change.

"Keep the two and the change," said Singerton. "We may get thirsty. I'll place the forty-five for you, and we'll divide the winnings."

Before I could quite make up my mind whether to accept his generous offer or not, he took the money, walked over to the table and handed over the bills, receiving in return a slip of paper, which he folded carefully and put in his pocket.

"Come on," he said to me. "Let's go down to Joe's. I'm dry as a bone."

"Hadn't we better wait and see if we win?" I asked.

"We won't know that until Satur-

day," replied Singerton, gently pulling me toward the door. I thought this rather strange, but remembered that I had once heard that there were such things as "future books" on the races, and held my peace. When we reached the street again, I asked Singerton what horse he had played.

"Horse!" he exclaimed; "horse! What under the sun are you talking about?"

I replied, with some asperity, that I thought I was talking about horses, but that I might possibly be mistaken.

"You certainly are," said Singerton. "Do you mean to say you thought we were betting on horses?"

"Of course I did. Wasn't that place a pool-room?"

"To be sure it was—a literary pool-room."

"A what?"

"A literary pool-room. One might think you had never heard of such an institution before."

"Never in my life. What do you bet on in a literary pool-room?"

"Why, on the six best-selling books of the week, of course! That's why we have to wait until Saturday for the returns. But you needn't worry about your money, old man. I played Red Cabbage to win, and the money's as good as in our pockets. That book is bound to head the list. I know, because I wrote it myself."

A true sport never hedges; besides, I have no more money. Otherwise, I might be tempted to go back to the pool-room and protect myself by playing the favorite. As it is, I can only wait.

But I wish Saturday were not such a long way off!



**"T**HREE is no rest for the wicked." True; the wicked take all the good things of life, and we blameless paragons of virtue have to put up with the rest.